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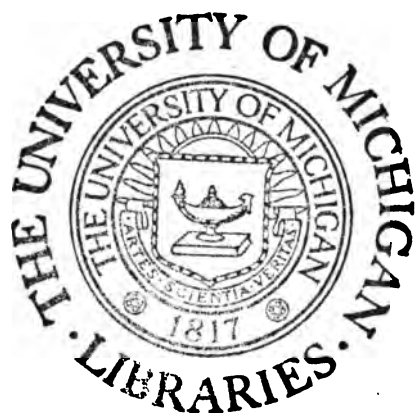
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MY LIFE'S RECORD

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WORKS BY F. REGINALD STATHAM.

Alice Rushton, and other Poems (1868).	<i>Longman.</i>
Glaphyra, and other Poems (1870).	<i>do.</i>
Eucharis: a Poem (1871).	<i>do.</i>
 From Old to New: a Sketch of the Present Religious Position (1872).	 <i>Longman.</i>
The Social Growths of the Nineteenth Century (1872).	<i>do.</i>
 Blacks, Boers, and British: a Three- Cornered Problem (1881).	 <i>Macmillan.</i>
 The Zulu Iniquity (1884).	 <i>Ridgway.</i>
Free Thought and True Thought: a Contribution to an Existing Argu- ment (1884).	 <i>Kegan Paul.</i>
 The Fiery Furnace: a Tale in Two Acts (1895).	 <i>Gibbing.</i>
Poems and Sonnets (1895).	<i>Unwin.</i>
The New Kingdom: a Study in State Socialism (1895).	<i>Sonnenschein.</i>
 Mr. Magnus: a Tale (1896).	 <i>Unwin.</i>
South Africa as it is (1897).	<i>do.</i>
Paul Kruger and his Times (1898).	<i>do.</i>
 Prosperity and Praise: a Cantata (1892).	 <i>Novello.</i>
Vasco da Gama: a Cantata (1895).	<i>do.</i>
South African National Songs (1895).	<i>do.</i>

MY LIFE'S RECORD

A Fight for Justice



Francis
BY
F. REGINALD STATHAM
(POET, MUSICIAN, NOVELIST, JOURNALIST, ESSAYIST, ETC.)

"One man, with justice on his side, is a majority"

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*NOTE.—This narrative should be read side by side with
the same author's story, "The Fiery Furnace."*

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MY LIFE'S RECORD

CHAPTER I

THE REASON WHY

IN October, 1900, my name attracted a good deal of attention by reason of telegrams from Pretoria stating particulars of certain evidence given before the Concessions Commission. In this evidence it was mentioned that, since the year 1896, I had been in receipt of a salary paid by the Netherlands South African Railway Company. In consequence of this statement, I addressed the following letter to several journals in London and the provinces :

“As my name has been mentioned in your columns in connection with the proceedings of the Concessions Commission in Pretoria, you will no doubt allow me space for a few words in explanation.

“When visiting England early in 1896, I was, as a result of the Jameson Raid, asked by the Netherlands Railway

Company to remain in this country in order to assist in giving 'accurate information about the South African Republic, its inhabitants and its Government, and to correct erroneous reports and false statements either in papers or in meetings.' The Netherlands Railway Company had a perfect right to make the proposal, and I had a perfect right to accept it, the more so as remaining in England involved me in serious financial sacrifices. Anyone who is curious is quite at liberty to see the letter making the arrangement, as well as the letter by which, now nearly twelve months ago, it was terminated.

"Having regard to the organised efforts made to mislead public opinion in the direction of war, I am glad to have been able to do something, however little, on behalf of that policy of justice and conciliation in South Africa which I have consistently advocated for more than twenty years past, often with no small risk and loss to myself. My concern, I may add, has been not less for the highest interests of Great Britain than for the peace and prosperity of South Africa."

The letter was published in the *Times*, the *Daily News*, the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Morning Leader*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Liverpool Daily Post*, and the *Manchester Guardian*. It was certainly annoying that, at a moment when I was looking forward to a complete severance from politics, South African or other, such a matter should have been brought forward. I was, however, quite prepared to justify my conduct to anyone who might have the right to ask for an explanation, and could therefore regard with equanimity the comments of journals whose business it has been to denounce all who

have ventured to oppose the more recent policy of the present Government in South Africa.

On the 20th October, however, something else happened. The *Daily Express* published the following article :

“NOT THE SAME STATHAM—EVIDENTLY.

“BY A SOUTH AFRICAN COLONIST.

“Most colonials in England, I am sure, must have been interested in the revelation made before the Transvaal Concessions Commission about the substantial salary paid to a Mr. F. Reginald Statham by the Netherlands Railway Company for ‘spreading the light,’ as required by the Boers, in this country.

“As, however, the *Daily News*—which, I understand, is one of your daily organs taking an Imperial and patriotic view of the war—has published a letter from Mr. Statham justifying his campaign, and even gravely argues that he ought not to have done what he did without disclosing that he was a paid agent of the Boers, I can only conclude that he is not the Mr. Statham we know.

“The Mr. Statham of our acquaintance was quite a different sort of man altogether. As editor of two Natal papers, he became notorious by his Republican leanings.

“He was always advocating a ‘cut the painter’ policy in the event of Natal receiving a responsible Government. That was in the late eighties, and the responsible Government did not come along until after he had left the colony.

“I should say here that a dramatic event which happened in Pietermaritzburg may have hastened the departure of this Mr. Statham from Natal. When the old post-office at Pietermaritzburg—a small, one-storeyed building, which looked out on Long-Market Street—was being pulled down

to make room for the Legislative Council Buildings, some old papers were found. Among them was an undelivered Liverpool newspaper, which had reference to a Statham past.

"My next recollection of this Mr. Statham is that he turned up at Kimberley as the editor of a pro-Rhodes organ! Nobody was more Imperialistic and Rhodesian than he during that time! But it was a Rhodesianism with an evident tendency to Transvaal secret service objects.

"Subsequently he became identified with papers at Pretoria and Bloemfontein, in which he 'went the whole hog' for Republican supremacy in South Africa. The chameleon-like changes of the man fascinated the colonials who had followed his career.

"There was an incident in our Mr. Statham's life in South Africa which has been the subject of comment. It occurred in Pretoria. It was commented on, among others, by the local Landdrost.

"For all these reasons, and many others I will not bore you with, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that in justice to the Mr. Statham who used to write letters from the National Liberal Club, and was accepted in this country as a Liberal with honest convictions about the strength of the Boer claims, it should be widely known that the other fellow of the same name ought not to be confused with him."

This was a very different matter from the comments above alluded to. It was a malicious attack, and was intended to be a malicious attack, upon my personal character and reputation. Such an attack, I felt, with due deference at the same time to the opinion of friends who urged that the *Express* was not worth noticing, could hardly be left unanswered. In any case, it set up a certain

standard of vilification for which one had to be prepared. As the attack was ingeniously made to cover my whole life, the answer to it lay in the story of my whole life. It seemed a not unnatural conclusion that the best means of telling the story of my whole life was to be found in an action for libel against the *Express*. Without an hour's delay, therefore, I gave instructions for such an action to be commenced. On the same day I took two further steps. I wrote to the Agent-General for Victoria, withdrawing an application I was making for the Ormond Professorship of Music in the Melbourne University; and I wrote to the Secretary of the National Liberal Club, tendering my resignation as a member. As regards the Melbourne Professorship, all that seems necessary to say is that my application was supported by a considerable amount of published musical work, and by personal testimonials of a very high order. As regards the National Liberal Club, I acted under the feeling—a feeling which I do not think was sufficiently appreciated by members of the committee—that when a personal attack is made upon a member of a club, it is the duty of such member spontaneously to give the club an opportunity of considering his relations to the club and the club's relations to himself.

Legal proceedings against the *Daily Express*

were thus promptly commenced. On reflection, however, it seemed to be in some degree doubtful whether the end I had in view could best be accomplished by such means. In the first place, the article in the *Express* was so ingeniously constructed, actual fact so ingeniously mixed up with false suggestion, that it seemed not impossible that with a hostile jury—an absolute certainty in the state of public feeling then prevailing—a verdict might, on a technical point, be given for the defendants, which would, in many quarters, be represented as a verdict on the merits of the case. For every reason, that was to be avoided. Then there was the consideration whether, seeing that the *Express* is owned by a limited liability company, with a capital of only £100, I should not, in the event of damages being awarded, experience great difficulty in obtaining them. But, above all, there was the consideration that, in proceeding with an action for libel, I should not be able, as I discovered, to place my case adequately before the public. It seemed, indeed, in the highest degree probable that, after immense expense and worry had been incurred over legal proceedings, with possibly a doubtful result, I should be obliged, in order to do myself justice, to adopt exactly the course I am adopting in these pages.

On all these grounds, I abandoned the action I

had commenced. The course adopted in these pages has, in my estimation, this additional advantage—that it furnishes occasion for a record that will remain. To some persons it may perhaps seem surprising that I should wish such a record to remain. Nevertheless, there must be a good many people both in this country and in South Africa who, if they bethink themselves, will remember that in a pamphlet, entitled “The Zulu Iniquity,” published in my name and under my direction in 1884, and to be found catalogued with other works of mine in the British Museum Library, the whole history of my life was unreservedly set forth. Those who have a recollection of that pamphlet will also be aware that the present occasion is not the first in respect of which an endeavour on my part to get the truth about South African affairs home to the minds of English men and women has been provocative of attacks, by those interested, on my personal reputation. They will doubtless recollect how, in 1883, when a Liberal Government was perpetrating injustice in Zululand, I upheld the cause of the Zulus side by side with the late Bishop Colenso, who, if he were living, would certainly have stood side by side with me in upholding the cause of justice to the Dutch populations of South Africa. The lapse of sixteen years, with their record of varied and (as I believe) not valueless

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work, has made it easier in 1901 to follow the same course that I followed in 1884, viz., to publish myself, with regard to myself, what my assailants, though malicious enough to hint at, dare not publish. The only difference I make is that what I publish now is, as compared with what I published in 1884, fuller, and, as I feel in a high degree confident, final.

These pages are, then, a record of my life, practically from the time when I first went to school. Besides being a personal history, they include references to my intimate connection, more than five-and-twenty years ago, with the liberal movement in theology, and still more copious references to my connection, extending over nearly twenty-five years, with South African affairs. It has, indeed, been a question with me whether I might not better place on record my South African experience quite apart from the more personal aspects of my career. The two things, however, are (as will be seen) so inextricably mixed up together that to keep them apart would be an impossibility. That impossibility is apparent in the mere fact that twice—first in 1883 and again in 1900—the interest I have taken in South African affairs has provoked personal attacks. Allusions to these attacks would be inevitable in any narrative of my work in connection with South Africa,

and these allusions would involve explanations which, unless finding their place naturally in the history of my whole life, would hardly be intelligible.

There is, moreover, another reason for making these pages a complete record. There are many persons, I have no doubt, who will be astonished at the depth of the malice which compels any man to dive back thirty or forty years into the past, and to deal with matters in respect of which his referees and witnesses must almost of necessity be dead. Malice, however, is not the worst adversary I have had to contend with. I might, perhaps, had it been so, have been content to leave the matter alone. I have had, and still have, more formidable adversaries in the cowardice and treachery of those who, in respect of South African controversies, have believed that I was right, have made use of my knowledge and experience, and then, at the first hint of a personal attack, have left me to stand alone without a word of defence or justification. There is one virtue which the supporters of an Imperialist policy in South Africa at least possess—the virtue of sticking to their own men through thick and thin. There was no need for Liberals, in repudiating Imperialistic principles, to repudiate the virtue of loyalty to those who have stood in the very forefront of their own battle.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE

11.2.44
I WAS born in Everton, Liverpool, on the 6th February, 1844. I was the fourth son in a large family of boys, my father being in practice as a solicitor.† My family was, I believe, very well known in Liverpool, both my grandfather and great-grandfather having successively filled the office of Town Clerk, while there are records of representatives of a still older generation, one of whom was post-master of Liverpool about the time of the American War of Independence.

The earliest event of any note in my life was a very severe illness, which occurred, I have been told, when I was three or four years old. There is a reason, which will appear later, for mentioning this illness, and I have in my possession a certificate, dated in 1875, from Dr. Chalmers, a very well-known medical practitioner in Everton, with reference to it, stating that he at that time "recommended great care" as regards any kind of mental strain or excitement. It was no doubt

owing to the wish not to press me in any way that I went to school somewhat late, viz., about Easter, 1856.

The school to which I first went was the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, a very well-known educational establishment, then, and for several years later, under the headship of Dr. Howson, the late Dean of Chester. The school was admirably organised to provide three distinct grades of education, the Upper School, to which I went, having turned out a considerable number of pupils who subsequently distinguished themselves at the universities, especially Cambridge. The master I was at first more especially under was the late Dr. James Porter, Master of Peterhouse. I remained there till Easter, 1858. Here is a note written by Dr. Howson to my father in 1861 :

“COLLEGIATE INSTITUTION, LIVERPOOL,

“*February* 18, 1861.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I can with truth say that your son Reginald was a most exemplary boy when he was here, and you know he was with us a considerable time. It will give me great pleasure at any time to speak or write in his favour.
—Yours very truly,

“J. S. HOWSON.

“H. H. Statham, Esq.”

At Easter, 1858, I left. The cause of my leaving was that, owing to the occurrence of family diffi-

culties, which of course I did not understand at the time, my godfather, the late Mr. Thomas Horsfall, who for many years sat for Liverpool in the House of Commons, offered to take charge of my education. He coupled his offer, however, with the condition that I should be placed with the tutor under whom, I believe, his own son had been educated. This was the late Rev. S. P. Boutflower, subsequently Archdeacon of Carlisle. Mr. Boutflower, who at one time took pupils at Seaforth, near Liverpool, had removed to Brathay, a mile or two out of Ambleside, where, in the old-fashioned house known as Old Brathay, he took a limited number of pupils. His pupils came chiefly from the Liverpool and Manchester districts, Colonel Sidebottom, late member for the High Peak Division of Derbyshire, being one of my fellow-pupils. Here is Mr. Boutflower's testimony regarding the period that I was under his care :

“OLD BRATHAY, AMBLESIDE,

“*March 6, 1861.*

“MY DEAR STATHAM,—I sincerely hope you may speedily be successful in your endeavour to meet with a situation in a merchant's office. Were I stirring among Liverpool men, you should certainly have my good word in your favour, for I should feel I was recommending a youth who, in addition to arithmetical knowledge, good common sense and general information, is possessed of the infinitely higher qualifications of truthfulness, conscientiousness, and high moral principle.

And if it will be of any service to you to show this note as expressing the opinion of one who knew you well from April, 1858, to October, 1859, you have my full permission to do so.

"Mrs. Boutflower unites with me in every kind wish, and I am, very truly yours,

"S. P. BOUTFLOWER.

"Mr. F. R. Statham."

I attach the greater importance to this testimony because, when I had been under Mr. Boutflower about a year, I caused him great annoyance by running away from school—an adventure to which I was driven, I think, by an organised system of bullying. At my earnest request, Mr. Horsfall consented to my making a change, at Michaelmas, 1859, to Windermere College, a large proprietary school kept jointly by Mr. G. H. Puckle and Mr. B. A. Irving. In respect of my sojourn there I have the following testimony:

"THE COLLEGE, WINDERMERE,

"*February 19, 1861.*

"MY DEAR STATHAM,—I hope you may succeed in your endeavour to enter commercial life. If it is likely to be of any use to you, I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to the excellent character that you maintained at Windermere, and in stating that I considered you, when you left, to be in point of education considerably above the average of boys who leave school to go into business.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

"G. HALE PUCKLE.

"Mr. F. R. Statham."

Later, in 1875, at a time when it was of interest to me to secure evidence as to the character of my career at school, Mr. Irving, who took entire control of the school on Mr. Puckle's retirement, gave me a similar testimonial, which I still have.

I left school finally at Michaelmas, 1860. I do not think I was ever, when at school, what a master would regard as a brilliant pupil. Certainly I never once in all my school career obtained a prize. The most interesting recollections of my school life are associated with English essays and with sundry translations of Horace's odes into English verse. There had been some talk on Mr. Horsfall's part of sending me to Cambridge. For some reason I never understood, this proposal came to nothing.

In view of events that occurred a few years later, it seems worth while to ask: What sort of a lad was I when I left school and proceeded to tackle the more serious business of life? I find considerable evidences of myself as a dabbler in verse and in philosophical speculation. I have still, for example, the manuscript of a paper I read in January, 1862—before I had reached my eighteenth birthday—to a local debating society, under the title of "The Planets; are they inhabited?"—a paper that certainly showed considerable acquaintance with the speculations of Whewell and Brewster, and with the philosophic aspects of astronomical

research. As regards my efforts in verse, I find them all touched with the same religious sentiment—a sentiment which I know was perfectly sincere, though I believe hardly a soul (and certainly no one of my own immediate family) was aware of its existence. Here are some lines bearing the date of the 13th May, 1860:

The rain is over, and the setting sun
 Gleams thro' the purple clouds once fraught with
 showers,
 Catching the western hill-tops one by one,
 And lighting up yon distant city's towers.

* * * * *

Low sinks the reddening sun into his rest,
 And thro' the ever-quivering poplars tall,
 Now brightly gleaming from the golden west,
 O'er the dark fields the parting sunbeams fall.

As when in some cathedral old and grey,
 Streams the red light thro' painted windows dim,
 Gilding the arches with the parting day,
 While up to heaven ascends the evening hymn.

And see where yonder ancient hoary keep
 Rears dark above the vale its rocky height ;
 The setting sun has caught its rugged steep
 And bathed it in a crimson lustre bright.

And as the sun sinks further out of sight,
 Higher and higher creeps the crimson ray,
 Till on the topmost tower's embattled height
 It lingers for a space, and fades away.

Fades from the earth, but thro' the twilight air
Upward and onward is the sunlight borne,
Till, lost in boundless space, forever there
Rejoices in an everlasting morn.

Thus when our mortal life from earth shall fade,
Our souls shall rise to realms beyond the sky,
Leaving forever all this earthly shade,
And lose themselves in vast eternity.

It will probably be agreed that the lad who could write verses of this kind at the age of sixteen was not very likely to be successful in the rough-and-tumble of ordinary business competition. But neither was he, I think, likely to be a wilful organiser of fraud. I find the same kind of sentiment running all through my scattered efforts of the same sort, the latest date recorded being July, 1864. To myself, the reference to these earlier efforts conveys the assurance that whatever I was after the catastrophe of my life, which occurred in 1865, I was also before it. And if that assurance is conveyed to myself, it will perhaps not seem unacceptable to others.

Leaving school at Michaelmas, 1860, and not having any other particular prospect in view, my natural object was to secure an opening in commercial life in Liverpool. That was a matter of some little difficulty. I had no particular influence

or means to back me, and, as it seemed, Mr. Horsfall, actuated possibly by the natural wariness of a member of Parliament, was not disposed to trouble himself further. It was not until April, 1861, that, through the intervention of an old friend, I secured a place in the office of Messrs. Trimmer & Grainger, a large firm engaged in the American corn and provision trade. I remained there for something over a year. I must confess that I do not think I played my cards very wisely. The Liverpool head of the firm, Mr. Henry Grainger (who subsequently became chairman of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce), rather wished to push me on; jealousies arose in the office; and the jealousies led to a quarrel, which resulted in my leaving. That nothing, however, had happened in any way reflecting on my character and reputation is proved by the following letters, the first from Mr. Grainger himself, the second from Mr. James P. Henderson, Mr. Grainger's business manager. It will be noted that both letters are dated several years subsequently to 1865, and that both writers, as Liverpool men, were perfectly aware of events occurring in that year, which might, perhaps, had they been so minded, have seemed to justify them in declining to say anything at all.

"CHARGROVE, CHELTENHAM,

"*September 24, 1874.*

"MR. F. REGINALD STATHAM.

"SIR,—I renew with pleasure the assurance I gave your father at the time of your leaving the offices of Trimmer & Grainger in Liverpool, that during the period of your engagement your conduct was perfectly satisfactory, say from April, 1861, to May, 1862. I considered you a young man of much promise.—Yours very sincerely,

"HENRY GRAINGER."

Mr. Henderson, who, I think, carried on the business under the name of Henderson, M'Millan & Co. after Mr. Grainger's retirement, wrote as follows:

"14 BRUNSWICK STREET, LIVERPOOL,

"*January 16, 1875.*

"DEAR SIR,—During the time that I was manager to the late firm of Trimmer & Grainger, you were in the employment of that firm for rather more than a year. During that time your conduct was excellent, and having had full opportunity of observing and testing your business capabilities, I can safely say that they were very good indeed. I always found you clear in comprehension and quick and correct in execution, while your talent for mercantile correspondence was decided. These qualities, with your good address and large store of general information, should make you valuable in almost any department of commercial life. I shall be pleased to hear of your success.—I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

"JAMES P. HENDERSON.

"Mr. F. R. Statham."

Having cut myself adrift, and having no influence at my back, I was at a loose end for a year or two, doing no harm, but, for myself, doing no particular good.

CHAPTER III

CATASTROPHE AND AFTERWARDS

IT is not an easy matter for me to deal with the occurrences of the year 1865. On the one hand, I feel bound to omit nothing that might, if I were telling this story in court, be reasonably expected to be elicited in cross-examination. On the other hand, I am bound to do justice to myself in respect of matters the knowledge of which is of necessity almost confined to myself. I must ask that allowance will be made for this difficulty. At the same time, I must point out that an account of the incidents which seem most seriously to reflect on my character was published in 1884—seventeen years ago—in the pamphlet, “The Zulu Iniquity,” already alluded to.

Some time in 1864—I am not quite clear about the exact date—I received permission from Mr. Walter Boulton, a member of a well-known Liverpool family, to join his office-staff in an honorary capacity. Mr. Boulton, whom I knew chiefly in connection with matters relating to cricket, was

then in business as the working member of a firm of cotton-brokers. The business done by the firm was very limited; in fact, I think the firm existed chiefly for the purpose of saving brokerage for the other members of the firm, who were engaged in speculative or manufacturing operations in other directions. Owing, however, to the high price of cotton through the American Civil War, any contact with cotton seemed promising. Mr. Boulton was the only partner in the firm whom I saw for many months. What my relations with him were are indicated by the following letter, written, as will be seen, in 1875:

“LIVERPOOL, *January* 18, 1875.

“DEAR STATHAM,—In reply to your letter, I have much pleasure in testifying that during your business connection with my late firm I had every reason to be satisfied with your ability and energy, and I have no doubt that your services would be most valuable to any commercial undertaking. Heartily wishing you all success.—I am, yours truly,

“WALTER BOULT.

“F. R. Statham, Esq.”

Some time early in 1865 Mr. Boulton retired from the firm, the style of which was altered by the exclusion of his name. Till that time I had no acquaintance whatever with the other partner, who then nominally assumed control of the business.

that everyone but myself, including prison officials, quite understood what was really the state of the case, and I should be glad even now, after the lapse of five-and-thirty years, to have an opportunity of thanking more than one of such officials for innumerable unrewarded acts of kindness and consideration, always within the limits of prison regulations. The strain being removed, I gradually, I suppose, recovered my mental balance. I occupied myself largely in composing—I cannot say writing—poems, which I remembered by repeating them in sections day by day, so many for each day in the week, assisting my memory by certain marks on the wall. I do not know that there was very much in them ; nevertheless, poems which subsequently Messrs. Longman published at their own risk, and to which the *Saturday Review* of the period devoted a whole article of moderate commendation, cannot have been altogether devoid of merit. Sensibility, as one reviewer remarked, was their prominent characteristic, while there was a good deal of the same religious sentiment that distinguished earlier work already referred to.

At the end of my sentence, I went to live, for six months, in a Midland town. It was not an arrangement I was consulted over, and I think it was a cruel one. I was certainly—other people knew it, though I did not—still suffering from the

quite sure, as aimless as my departure. The recollection of a number of little circumstances convinces me that I had not the least power of realising the serious position in which I had placed myself. The money I had was, all but a very small portion, returned. It was, I suppose, only part of the natural order of things that, as soon as I arrived in England once more, I should be arrested. What might have been done by the firm I was engaged with, I do not know. The firm, however, had got into difficulties through my inexperience, and (this, at least, is what I have always understood) the creditors insisted on my prosecution. No attempt was made on my behalf at investigation or explanation, and I was myself quite incapable at the time of explaining anything. Possibly my relatives, with whom the whole matter rested, thought that, as my life was apparently irretrievably wrecked, the less said the better. At any rate, I was told that it would be best to plead guilty to the charge laid against me, and I did so, with the result that, at the Liverpool Borough Sessions, I was sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

What my own idea was about the position in which I was thus placed, I have no clear recollection. But whatever my own idea was, I made no attempt to clear myself, to myself, by any theory of mental disturbance. At the same time, I believe

thought I was dabbling in theological heresy ; for I have among my letters a testimonial from him dated in May, 1875, in which he refers to me as "my friend and former pupil." I think I may venture to quote at length a letter dated in 1869. Here it is :

"THE DEANERY, CHESTER,
"September 13, 1869.

"MY DEAR STATHAM,—I regret extremely that of late I have treated many correspondents ill, and you among the rest. Increasing work, and also the fatigue that results from it, is my uniform excuse.

"Should you decide to publish by subscription, I will most gladly give my name ; and I must confess that Longman's note is not encouraging in any other direction.¹

"It occurs to me that you might try to secure admission for poems in successive numbers of *Fraser* or *Good Words*, with the view of collecting them into a volume afterwards. I would gladly give you an introduction to Strahan, if I have not already done so.

"With kind regards to your brother,—I am, your sincere friend,

"J. S. Howson."

In a later letter, dated 21st June, 1870, Dr. Howson says : "First let me congratulate you on your intended marriage, in which I most sincerely wish you the utmost happiness." Further on in the same letter, he says : "If I hear of any opening

¹ This had reference to a proposed second volume of poems

of the kind which you desire, I will certainly let you know ; and if you make any application, I will support it. But I think, if the responsibility of actively recommending you were thrown upon me, I could not rightly withhold all knowledge of the past ; but you would be always sure of the most careful thought on my part in any effort to do you service." The view thus expressed, I may say, at the time completely coincided with my own. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that Dr. Howson was, in common with all residents in Liverpool, perfectly well acquainted with all that had passed in 1865.

My first volume was published in 1868. It was very fairly noticed, on the whole, both the *Saturday Review* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* according it an entire article. Its publication, however, was marred by a serious mistake. It was not published in my own name, but under the pseudonym of "Francis Reynolds." That was not done by my own wish, and it was done against the earnest advice of my friend the Dean of Chester. His idea, and my own idea, was that the publication of such a volume, if associated with my name, might do a good deal towards correcting the unfavourable impression left by the events of 1865. The wish that my name should be suppressed came from my own relatives, and I yielded to that wish,

though feeling convinced that it was a mistake to do so.

I remained in Bury St. Edmunds for two or three years, occupying myself largely with literary projects, and always hoping that something might turn up that would give me a new opening in life. As regards what had happened in 1865, it was, when I thought of it at all, a matter of pain and puzzle. I had suspicions of my own as to the real root of my defection, but I could not admit the validity of suspicions which, as far as I knew, had arisen as an afterthought. On the other hand, I felt myself cut off from all ordinary lines of occupation; for while I could not suffer any concealment regarding my previous history, I knew that that previous history, if known, would form an almost insurmountable barrier. I may, however, quote a letter or two which will serve to show how I impressed others. The first of these is from the late Rev. H. Percy Smith, Vicar of Barton, near Bury St. Edmunds, who had at one time been curate to Charles Kingsley, at Eversley, and to whom I had communicated a knowledge of the events of 1865.

"December 9, 1874.

"MY DEAR MR. STATHAM,—You are at perfect liberty to say for me to any to whom you may care to say it, that during the three or four years of your residence at Bury (1868-71), I

saw a great deal of you, both at my own house and elsewhere ; and that we very frequently conversed upon the subjects which are of the highest importance in life ; and that my full and clear conviction is that you have the sincerest desire to do what is right in any circumstances in which you may be placed.

"It is only fair that I should add that I consider you to be possessed—I mean in things intellectual—of very considerable ability.—Believe me, very faithfully yours,

"H. PERCY SMITH.

"F. Reginald Statham, Esq."

The next is from the late Mr. William Salmon, for many years Town Clerk of Bury St. Edmunds, and was written when I was applying, in 1876, for the post of Secretary to the Bristol College.

"BURY ST. EDMUNDS,

"May 8, 1876.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have much pleasure in bearing my testimony to your general ability, and have reason to say so, when I remember how mainly indebted I was to you in organising the Bury Choral Society, of which I was President. Except for your exertions, the difficulties attending that matter would never have been overcome. You, however, by your skill and tact, brought the discordant elements with which we had to deal into a state of agreement, which at the outset I thought improbable, if not impossible. This fact is much better testimony than opinion of your merits. I think whoever may secure your services will be fortunate, and I am strongly of opinion that they will not regret their choice.—Believe me, yours truly,

"W. SALMON."

"F. R. Statham, Esq."

The same matter is referred to in a letter from

the late Rev. Robert Stote Fox, rector of Nowton,
Bury St. Edmunds.

"HORRINGER RED HOUSE,
"BURY ST. EDMUNDS,
"May 8, 1876.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have much pleasure in adding my testimony to your ability and management. I well remember your success in reconciling hostile elements, in securing monetary and other support, and in arranging the business of the Society [the Bury Choral Society] to which you were secretary. I shall be happy to hear of your successful election, and remain, very sincerely yours,

"ROBT. STOTE FOX.

"Since you left I have accepted the Rectory of Nowton, which Lord Bristol kindly presented me to."

The interest I took in the Bury Choral Society led to what was to me a very important event. It was owing to this that, at Christmas, 1869, I first met my wife, who was staying with relatives in Bury. We became engaged a little more than a month later.

CHAPTER IV

WORK IN EDINBURGH

MY first meeting with my wife coincided with the development on my part of an increasingly strong desire to take some active share in religious work. There was nothing new to me in this. It was only the renewal, in a stronger degree perhaps than before, of wishes that had been present with me years before, and which (as I have shown) found some expression in verse even before I finally left school. Entrance into the ministry in the Church of England, in which I had been brought up, was, I felt, barred by my want of a university degree. It seemed possible, however, that there might be other religious bodies in which this want of such a qualification would not be regarded as an objection, and which would, perhaps, be more liberal in respect of theological limits. The Unitarian body in especial attracted me, and early in 1870 I entered into correspondence with the late Dr. Martineau, with the view of ascertaining how far that body could offer me the opening I was in search of.

On the 7th May, 1870, I had an interview with Dr. Martineau in London, at which the question was fully discussed. A memorandum regarding that interview, written at the time, shows that the point I chiefly dwelt on was the necessity for a perfectly free ministry, quite apart from any particular set of theological opinions. Put shortly, my idea was that the man who had something to say should be free to say it, and I was disappointed to find that the Unitarian body did not appear to afford room for such a position. By agreement, however, I forwarded to Dr. Martineau some written discourses (or sermons) of mine. His letter commenting on them was so kind and flattering that I may be excused for quoting from it. The letter is dated the 17th June, 1870.

"It is impossible not to recognise the originality and power of these discourses, and the turns and flashes of beauty which bring out their thoughts with a frequent charm of surprise. They affect me with a large sympathy, too, in their humane and lofty claims for the soul and life of man, and their lamentation of the degrading materialism which clouds in our time every vision of the supreme beauty of good. The second discourse, especially, carries me along with its impressive indignation against the meanness of much that wears the modern dress of sanctity."

Some criticism of minor points followed. But there the matter rested for the moment, the correspondence leading to no practical result.

Meantime, I had published, with my wife's financial assistance—this was prior to our marriage—a second volume, under the title of “Glaphyra, and other Poems,” which, though in no respect a commercial success, was very much more favourably commented on by reviewers. No doubt I had made a distinct advance. A second time, however, at the instance of my own relatives, I made the mistake of publishing under a pseudonym.

In October, 1870, my marriage took place. In referring to this event, I must perforce make use of whatever words can most adequately (though how inadequately!) express my sense of what I owe to my wife, without whom no success that I have ever known could have been achieved, and without whom the too frequent times of strain and anxiety could not have been endured. Our marriage, I may say, was the most frightfully imprudent marriage conceivable. I had no occupation and (as I might almost say) no reputation, while my wife had a few hundred pounds. We passed nearly five months of the winter of 1870-71 at Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight, living at the rate (as an old account-book shows) of something under or over £2 a week. My time was largely occupied with new poems, a good many of which remained unpublished for five-and-twenty years. The most important work of this kind was a poem

in the form of a series of letters, published in 1871, under the title of "Eucharis," in which I actually anticipated by twenty-five years Mr. Grant Allen's "Woman who Did." It seems odd that a poem written during the first months of a singularly happy married life, and dedicated to my wife, should have been regarded by certain reviewers as aiming at the abolition of marriage.

It was during our stay at Freshwater that, in the following of the idea which had inspired my interviews with Mr. Martineau, I entered into correspondence with the Rev. Charles Voysey, who was then giving up his living in Yorkshire, and contemplating the foundation of a new Theistic Church. As a result of this correspondence, he asked me to meet him in London, and on the day before Easter Sunday, 1871, I met him accordingly at the house of Mr. P. W. Clayden. Mr. Clayden, who had come to London from Nottingham a few years previously to join the staff of the *Daily News*, was also minister of the Free Christian Church in Kentish Town. The acquaintance I formed with him led to his inviting me to occupy his pulpit occasionally—an invitation of which I took advantage pretty frequently, I believe with entire satisfaction to him, during the summer of 1871. During this period, too, I was in frequent communication with the Rev. R. R. Suffield, whose

secession from the Roman Catholic Church had awakened a good deal of interest, and who had taken charge of a Unitarian congregation in Croydon. I may give his impressions in the following letter :

“ALFRED VILLA, PARSONSMEAD,
“CROYDON, SURREY,
“December 5, 1874.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Only a day or two before receiving your letter, I had been wondering as to your whereabouts; and regretting that I had not seen you in any satisfactory way since your return from Scotland. I should so much like to have heard your impressions regarding the movement you were there engaged in.

“I remember pleasantly those evenings when you so kindly and so earnestly opened out great topics at the *conversazioni* in my house ; and I should now enjoy such more even than when I was ‘weary with the battle of my change.’—Very truly yours,

“ROBERT RODOLPH SUFFIELD.”

Towards the autumn of 1871, an offer reached me to take charge of an independent congregation in Edinburgh. The offer, which came to me through Mr. Voysey, appealed to me from the first, as seeming to afford the very opening I was in search of. The history of the Edinburgh congregation was somewhat interesting. A few years previously, the Rev. James Cranbrook, who held the position of minister of the Albany Street Congregational Church in Edinburgh, had offended

a portion of his congregation by what they regarded as too great a freedom of theological opinion.¹ Rather than yield to censure from his congregation, Mr. Cranbrook, a man of high attainments and culture, quitted his church, a large proportion of his congregation accompanying him, and established himself as a preacher in a public hall. The movement attracted considerable attention, especially among leading men in literature and science. The late Professor Huxley, for example, went down to Edinburgh to lecture for Mr. Cranbrook, and delivered to his congregation the celebrated "lay sermon" on "The Physical Basis of Life." Mr. Cranbrook's health, however, failed a year or two after he had left the Albany Street Church. After his death the movement was carried on by Dr. Page, subsequently Professor of Geology at Durham University. On Dr. Page's retirement from Edinburgh, Mr. Voysey was applied to by the congregation to suggest a successor, and, as above stated, he recommended an application to me.

As I have said, the proposal seemed to offer the very opening I was in search of. In October I went to Edinburgh for ten days or so, to stay over

¹ I contributed a sketch of Mr. Cranbrook and his work to the *National Review* for October, 1896, under the title of "The Real Robert Elsmere."

a couple of Sundays and make the acquaintance of the leaders in the movement. I find the following passage in a letter to my wife, dated the 8th October, 1871 :

“I look upon it as certain that I shall be asked to remain here. There seems to be an impression that I just supply what they wanted. I am as much pleased as they are, for I never thought it possible to meet with a number of people so thoroughly earnest, and yet without any ‘taint’ of ecclesiastical notions. I am one of themselves, only one with a particular duty, which, you know, is quite my view.”

Again, on the same date :

“The service this morning seems to have given satisfaction. The room—the Freemasons’ Hall—is a very nice one, and my position is without a taint of sacerdotalism.”

The result of my visit was that, as I expected, a request was made to me to take permanent charge of the movement. In order, however, to preserve my own freedom, I laid down certain terms, expressed in the following letter to a leading member of the congregation :

“MY DEAR * * * *.—The following are the terms upon which I could occupy the position you desire to see filled :—

“That the hiring of the hall should stand in my name, and that I should be the solely responsible person.

“That the rent should always be kept paid six months in advance, and, if necessary, out of my own private funds.

"That some person who has the best interests of the undertaking at heart, and who possesses the esteem of those attending the Sunday assemblies, should, on my nomination, act as Treasurer.

"That any person attending the assemblies on Sunday should be entitled to subscribe as much or as little as he or she chose towards the expenses; but that *no difference whatever* should be made between those subscribing and those not subscribing.

"That no particular times or seasons should be fixed for the payment of subscriptions, it being known always who is empowered to receive them.

"That under no circumstances whatever should any person be applied to for a subscription.

"(These points embody the principle that the labourer is worthy of his hire—the principle, in fact, of supply and demand. If I were of use to those attending the assemblies, then they would undoubtedly support me. If I were not of use, then I should have no right to be there.)

"Under these circumstances, a Committee would, of course, be unnecessary; but it would be my continual endeavour to ascertain the feeling of those forming the assemblies; to listen to suggestions, to weigh objections from anyone, and naturally (of course) most readily from those who are known to have the interests of the whole undertaking most at heart; my sole object being to do what is most useful to all.

"If, after the yearly payment of the expenses of the hall and my just expenses of living, there should be any considerable balance remaining, I should then take the feeling of the congregation as to how it should be applied.

"You will find, I think, that this coincides with my earliest letter, and, under such circumstances as these, the six months' trial I spoke of would not be necessary.

"I should stay as long as I was of use."

These terms were novel, perhaps Quixotic; my

object was to keep the relations between my congregation and myself free from even the very slightest suspicion of a commercial bargain. It is only just to say that I, on my side, never had any reason to complain of the way in which the arrangement worked, though I believe that, as a matter of fact, the necessary financial support came chiefly from three or four wealthy men who were not resident in Edinburgh. A leading Scotch newspaper, commenting on the arrangement, said : "Is it a new thing after all? Is it not rather just a more distinct recognition of something as old as Christianity itself?—this, namely, that the influence of a pastor in the church, in the congregation, and in the world at large, is greatly more a personal matter than a professional one."

I remained in Edinburgh for upwards of eighteen months. I always regard the work I did there as the very best work I have ever done in my life. It was work on the highest intellectual plane, and I can hardly imagine a more tempting position than that of one who, while content with a simple manner of living, is engaged, for the benefit of himself and others, in the thinking out of the highest problems in philosophy and morals. If the question should be asked—Did I ever consider the chances of my work being disturbed by some echo of what had passed in Liverpool only six

years before?—the reply must be that I was so absorbed in my work that I hardly gave the matter a thought, and that when I did chance to think of it my reflections were of this kind—that so long as I was engaged, for the very best of motives, upon so good a work, I should not be allowed to suffer. The event justified this expectation. My object, as I understood it, was to formulate some basis of religious belief for a number of persons who had, to a large extent, cast off accepted orthodox creeds. Two volumes of my Edinburgh lectures, published in 1872, under the respective titles of “From Old to New,” and “Social Growths of the Nineteenth Century,” were accorded an amount of notice of which any man might have been proud, and which was certainly most flattering to a young man who, quite unequipped with anything more than an ordinary commercial education, ventured upon the most recondite problems of thought and ethics. As to the manner in which my work impressed others, there is abundant testimony. For example, Mr. Voysey, writing to me on the 28th November, 1874, said :

“ I always thought the principles on which you accepted the post at Edinburgh were noble in the extreme, and such, in fact, as I have never heard of before. And while I have the highest opinion of your generosity of heart, I also admire the originality and vigour of your intellect, even while compelled to differ from some of your expressed views.”

Dr. Wallace, who was then Professor of Church History in Edinburgh University, wrote on the same date as follows :

“ Although I cannot, from personal observation, say much in regard to the character of your work in the religious services which you conducted for some time in this city, yet I had opportunities of forming some opinion of it from conversation with persons well qualified to form a judgment in the matter, and from perusal of addresses which you published ; and I willingly testify to the impression made upon my mind as to the earnestness, the Catholic and essentially Christian spirit, and the high ability and intelligence which you carried into the duties of your position.”

The late Dr. William Smith, of Edinburgh, well known for his translation of Fichte's works, wrote to me on the 30th November, 1874, in these terms:

“ Not having come directly into contact with your public work in this city, I can speak of it only in general terms, and mainly at second-hand. But I know that for a period of nearly two years after the death of the late Mr. Cranbrook, you carried on, under considerable disadvantages, but with great ability and a fair measure of success, the administration of the religious society which had been formed by him. I understand that the position you took was that of perfectly free speculation, and that your style, both of thought and expression, is very fairly represented in the two volumes of discourses which you published. I regret that, from want of knowledge, I am unable to add anything as to your success in the pastoral relation, if, indeed, you assumed any function of that sort ; but of this others will be able to speak. I have been informed, however, that the conditions under which

your work was undertaken were of a very, indeed unusually, disinterested character, and that the manner in which it was discharged was such as to gain you general respect and esteem among your people."

The late Mr. Alexander Russel, for so many years editor of the *Scotsman*, said :

"You may confidently refer to me any person with whom you think my recommendation would have any weight."

Professor Hodgson (Professor of Commercial and Political Economy and Mercantile Law in Edinburgh University) wrote on the 17th December, 1874, the following letter :

"BONALY, COLINTON, NEAR EDINBURGH,
"December 17, 1874.

"DEAR SIR,—In answer to your inquiry of the 11th inst., I have much pleasure in saying that on the occasion of my only visit to the Freemasons' Hall in Edinburgh during your tenure of office (if I may so speak) I was much interested by your discourse, and gratified by your mode of conducting the service. I have since purchased for perusal and preservation your 'Social Growths of the Nineteenth Century,' and 'From Old to New.' Both books seem to me to show no little power and independence of thought, as well as great felicity of expression.—Yours most truly,

"W. B. HODGSON.

"F. R. Statham, Esq.

"P.S.—I should be glad to hear of your doings from time to time."

Here is the testimony of the Rev. R. B. Drummond, then (and now) minister of the Unitarian Church in Edinburgh. It is dated 30th November, 1874 :

“ During his residence in Edinburgh, I had many opportunities of meeting Mr. F. R. Stathan, and of hearing about the work which he carried on here in connection with the Freemasons' Hall congregation. And I have much pleasure in saying that through these means I was led to form a very high estimate of his character and abilities.”

The late Dean Stanley, writing on the 3rd December, 1874, said :

“ I have pleasure in stating that from my perusal of some of your books, and from my few interviews with you, I formed the conclusion that your intentions were good, and that you had worked with ability in fulfilment of them.”

Dr. Henry Maudsley, the well-known author of “ Pathology and Physiology of Mind,” referring in 1872 to my lectures, said :

“ Permit me to thank you most sincerely for kindly sending me your two works, one of which I have already read with much gratification and profit.

“ I sincerely wish you success in the good work which you have undertaken, and doubt not that you will by your lectures confer a great intellectual benefit on many persons.”

Dr. Martineau, in a letter which he afterwards gave me full permission to make use of, said, writing on the 2nd December, 1874 :

"So long as I had the advantage of some sources of personal knowledge through the reading of your MSS., which were not accessible to others, I felt it quite admissible to bear, as I often did, my testimony to your force of genius and earnest quest of truth. Since all my impressions, however, were derived from your writings, and they are now before others, not less than before myself, I cannot but see that all my special rights are gone, and that it would be an impertinence in me to put on record an opinion which has nothing in it to justify its separate appearance. The brilliancy and breadth of your two volumes will tell the story of your powers and of your aims with far more effect than any words of secondary description from myself.

"Moreover, as I cannot foresee, and you cannot, what might turn up for anything which I might write, I should find it needful, in order to guard against misconstruction, to prevent my appreciation of your genius from being identified with agreement in your views of things, and a testimony burdened with such qualifications is really less serviceable than none at all.

"Though, however, I cannot comply with your request in its general form, I shall always be glad to state my impressions to any individual inquirer who may care for my opinion, and who may appear likely, on obtaining it, to be useful to you."

Other letters, written about the same time, referring to the literary and intellectual value of my work, are from Matthew Arnold, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Professor Knight (of St. Andrews), Mr. C. Kegan

Paul, the late Professor Henry Morley, Sir Edward Russell, and Mr. P. W. Clayden.

After some eighteen months, I gave up the position in Edinburgh, not because I was tired of it, or because I had found some more remunerative occupation, but because my experience there rendered me extremely doubtful whether any such work could be carried on with advantage. The danger I saw was this—that those who connected themselves with such a movement were very much more disposed to attack old beliefs than to formulate new ones. My own work had nothing whatever to do with such attack. My business was rather to build up than to destroy, and it seemed to me that so long as I occupied a position which might be mistakenly associated with the idea of destruction, I was helping rather to injure than to benefit those to whom I spoke. A lecture I delivered in the early part of 1873, under the title of “The Danger of Destructivism”—a lecture subsequently included in my book, “Free Thought and True Thought”—very well expressed my feeling on this subject, and I think served to give point to the decision I finally arrived at.¹ I resigned my position, leaving, I think, no room for doubt as to

¹ In return for this lecture, which was printed separately at the time, the late Matthew Arnold sent me a copy of his “Literature and Dogma.”

my motives for doing so, recommending the members of my congregation to go back to their old churches and make the best of them. I can imagine that this counsel gave offence to some ; others, as I learnt a good many years afterwards, acted on my advice, and did not regret doing so. My own feeling was that, if I were to handle religious matters again, it could only be in connection with the Church of England. I had some correspondence with both the Bishop of Manchester (the late Dr. Fraser) and the Archbishop of Canterbury (the late Dr. Tait) on the subject of my taking orders, regarding them as the leading representatives of the more liberal school of thought within the Church of England. A statement of my opinions on certain points, however, barred the way, and the correspondence never went beyond the preliminary stage.

CHAPTER V

IN LIVERPOOL AGAIN

THE resignation of my Edinburgh position was a very serious sacrifice. I had nothing else at the moment to turn to, and I began to feel more and more the difficulties naturally resulting from the events of 1865. After reflection, it seemed to me that, in order to start on a sure foundation, I ought to go back to Liverpool again—I was in London for some months after leaving Edinburgh—fortified by the credit I had gained from my literary and other work, and live down, in Liverpool itself, the remembrance of former events. The idea was, I must confess, declared, by some who came to hear of it, to be Quixotic and impracticable. I was convinced then, however, as I am convinced still, that the principle it enunciated was right. Being on a visit to my own family in Birkenhead, whom I had consulted prior to my resignation in Edinburgh, I entered into communication with certain business men in Liverpool, who, as I had reason to believe, had pressed on my prosecution in 1865.

The effort was naturally painful, and the direct result was disappointing. I met with some sympathy, it is true, and I have special reason to remember the kindness of the late Mr. Ambrose Waln, an old friend of my father's, who then held the office of Clerk to the Commissioners (practically Town Clerk) of Birkenhead. But even he, though approving the idea of what I wished to do, declared its impracticability. My moving in the matter, however, brought facts to my knowledge of which I had been in complete ignorance. I wish to pass over as lightly as possible matters which were exceedingly painful at the time, and which created on my side what I cannot help feeling was a just resentment towards certain members of my own family. I learnt that months before the occurrence of the disastrous events of 1865, members of my family had known that I was not in a state of health fit to stand the strain of a responsible position; that they had been medically warned of what the possible result might be; that they had utterly neglected this warning; that neither at the period of my disgrace nor at any time afterwards had they made the very smallest attempt to set me right with any one person, though they knew that I was, at a later time, reaping no inconsiderable credit with men of the highest reputation in literature and philosophy. Beyond this they had, by urging

me to withhold my name from more than one publication, stood in the way of my own efforts towards rehabilitation. They had never even made an attempt to relieve my own mind in respect of recollections which they must have known were painful and harassing. And when, owing to the fresh light that had come to me, I took the matter into my own hands, I found, to my intense surprise, that my efforts, instead of being regarded with sympathy in my own family circle, had to encounter a continuous and determined opposition. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this opposition on the part of relatives was based on the consideration that, in proportion as I could justify myself, their neglect, to use no stronger expression, might become more apparent.

As will be readily understood, an explanation of the events of 1865, which I could not accept so long as it seemed to have been suggested as an afterthought, became an altogether different matter when I found that that explanation could be traced back to a period months before the occurrence of those events. I put all the facts together, and submitted them to the gentleman whose name appears at the foot of the following letter, and whom everyone at all acquainted with Liverpool will recognise as the leading partner in the oldest legal firm in that city.

"LACES, BIRD, NEWTON & RICHARDSON,
"1 UNION COURT, LIVERPOOL,
"February 12, 1875.

"MY DEAR SIR,—As you seem to think that my doing so might be of use to you, I have no hesitation in writing to you to say that, after carefully considering the letters and testimonials in your possession, and the facts which have been put before me, I am bound to come to the conclusion that at the time when the events occurred some years back, which created so strong a prejudice against you in Liverpool, you were labouring under a temporary aberration of mind, resulting, in the first instance, from the recurrence of an illness to which you had previously been subject, but immediately brought on by your being unfortunately placed in a position of responsibility for which neither your age nor experience fitted you ; and that, in consequence, I do not consider you in any way morally responsible for what then took place.

"If it will aid you in any way, you are quite at liberty to make any use you please of this letter, and of the fact that I have arrived at this conclusion after slow and careful consideration, having a very strong feeling on these subjects, which made me at first very decidedly (but I hope not unkindly) decline to hear anything of the matter.

"The same strong feeling towards the offence itself makes me the more glad to feel able to acquit you, as I certainly now do, of any moral guilt, and to regard you as the victim of unfortunate circumstances, over which you had no possible control.

"Your subsequent career, as well as the character you previously bore, goes far to justify this belief, if any such justification were needed.

"Wishing you all success in your endeavour to clear and establish your character,—I remain, yours faithfully,

"EDWD. W. BIRD.

"F. Reginald Statham, Esq."

I must say a word on this question of responsibility. I am not going to venture on that doubtful and disputed ground. So far as all the world is concerned, I accept responsibility. I do so for two reasons. In the first place, if it is a question of accepting more responsibility than is justly due to me, or less, I prefer to accept the more rather than the less. In the next place, by accepting responsibility, I make my present action more valuable for the assertion of a principle that needs to be asserted, viz., the moral and legal right of every man or woman to retrieve any error or misfortune by subsequent conduct. There are, without doubt, many men and women who have errors or misfortunes to live down. By accepting responsibility, I place myself with them, and claim for them all the benefit of any success I have achieved or may yet achieve for myself.

As regards another possible aspect of the question, I believe it would be quite in accordance with a wide experience to regard my marriage in 1870 as having exercised a most favourable effect in eliminating all lingering traces of the mental disturbance of 1865. I took care, however, to fortify myself with the opinion of one of the highest living authorities on such subjects. Here is his opinion, as expressed in June, 1875 :

"9 HANOVER SQUARE, W.,

"*June 3, 1875.*

"DEAR SIR,—I can safely assure you that a temporary mental disturbance, which occurred under circumstances of great strain, ought not to cause any serious apprehension to yourself or others for the future. It is not at all likely to recur; or perhaps I ought to say, the likelihood of its recurrence is so very small that it certainly ought not to be allowed in any way to prejudice your interests.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,

"H. MAUDSLEY.

"Regd. Statham, Esq."

Mr. Bird's letter, coupled with the various testimonials I had collected, had the effect of bringing me numerous letters of congratulation from persons well known in Liverpool who, not impossibly found it in agreement with independent impressions of their own. These letters are in my possession, but it does not seem necessary to quote from them. I will, however, for a reason that will appear later, quote a letter from Dr. Martineau.

"GRETA BRIDGE INN,

"BARNARD CASTLE,

"*August 14, 1875.*

"DEAR SIR,—I have found time, sooner than I had expected, to read the biographical notes so succinctly put together by Mrs. Statham, with the appendix of letters in confirmation of her statements. The passage in your history, which has dashed it with so much sorrow, was not unknown

to me. The construction put upon it by Mr. Bird has much evidence in its favour, and derives authority from the mere fact that it is his. But, even apart from this, it would be most cruel to visit with perpetual remembrance a solitary act of wrong—an act out of keeping with the agent's whole character before and after—an act which, instead of repeating itself, has produced only a stronger revulsion from all that is dishonourable, and a more resolute purpose to meet the struggle of life on the terms of a noble warfare. Every right-minded person must respect the manly frankness with which you lay bare the blot upon the past, and invoke the support of a just sympathy in your determination that it shall dwindle to nothing on the broad field of a worthy life. Time may be required for the restoration of confidence. But I cannot doubt that with so many friends already prepared to give it, you will soon reach the end of your present difficulties. I sincerely wish that I could suggest any opening of promise. But my retirement from the active world reduces me, I grieve to say, to uselessness in all such matters.—I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

“JAMES MARTINEAU.”

Quite apart from its effect upon others, Mr. Bird's letter had the very highest value for myself. It showed me that I was justified in regarding the events of 1865 in a light which largely deprived their recollection of the pain with which it had formerly been associated. More than that, it enabled me to make free use, for my own advancement, of such testimonials as I could command. The result of this increased freedom was made very evident when, in May, 1876, I became a candidate for the post of Secretary to the Bristol College, then in course of organisation under a committee of which

Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol, was president. Dr. Martineau strongly backed up my application, the majority of the testimonials I sent in being from Liverpool men, who, of course, were well acquainted with my previous history. Although I was among twelve selected candidates, my application was not, after all, successful. The application had its results, however, in another respect. Meantime, I had joined the staff of the *Liverpool Albion*—an old-established daily (evening) and weekly paper—in the capacity of Assistant Editor. The post was not worth very much, but it gave me a living, besides (what was of greater importance in my eyes) giving me a distinct *status* in Liverpool. It was while I was engaged with the *Liverpool Albion* that a proposal was made to me to go to South Africa. How that proposal reached me is stated in the following letter from the proprietor of the *Natal Witness*:

“‘NATAL WITNESS’ OFFICE,
“MARITZBURG, NATAL,
“March 13, 1882.

“DEAR MR. STATHAM,—Referring to our conversation the other day, and at your request, I willingly put on record the circumstances under which I first became acquainted with you.

“When I was in England in 1876, Dr. Walter Smith, who was then editing the *Witness*, wrote to me intimating his wish to discontinue doing so; and suggesting that I should

write to Professor Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, with a request that he would recommend a suitable gentleman to conduct the paper.

"On my writing to Professor Jowett, he gave me your name, referring me to Messrs. Longmans, publishers, for your address.

"I communicated with you at Liverpool, where you were then acting as assistant editor of the *Liverpool Daily Albion*.

"You accepted my offer, and came out to Natal the following year.—Yours sincerely,

"P. DAVIS, Jun."

Thus it was that I went to South Africa, with the very highest credentials, and with an expressed determination to make myself an authority in England on South African affairs. As regards the events of 1865, I had, though not exactly in the way I expected, carried out my intention of living them down in the place where they had occurred. Could anyone have done more?

As I have already said, it is a matter of some difficulty with me to allude in what may seem an adequate manner to an episode in my life which, whatever explanation of it is accepted, can only be regarded as representing the very highest form of misfortune. On the one hand, I may seem not to have been sufficiently frank; on the other hand, I may have failed to make the most of facts and circumstances that tell in my favour. I will, however, venture to say this—that no one, taking a broad view of this episode, can fail to find in my

determination to live it down in the place where it occurred a substantial confirmation of the explanation accepted by the eminent legal authority whose letter I have quoted. No man, I will venture to say, who was possessed of what may be called a criminal mind, or who had at any time been conscious of a criminal intention, could have arrived at such a determination—a determination involving the acutest pain of which a sensitive nature is capable. And whenever or wherever this narrative is considered in an impartial spirit, this fact, I am completely convinced, will stand out clearly and beyond contradiction.

CHAPTER VI

TO NATAL AND BACK

WE sailed from Dartmouth for Natal on the 23rd March, 1877, in the steamer *Caldera*, which had been temporarily chartered by the Castle Packets Company. Among our fellow-passengers was the late Mr. W. Y. Campbell, subsequently vice-president of the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines, the rector of Hawarden—the Rev. Stephen Gladstone—and Mr. Herbert Gladstone. The voyage was somewhat delayed through the rough weather we encountered in the Bay of Biscay, so that we did not arrive at Capetown till the evening of the 18th April.

The first news that met us, when we dropped anchor, was news of the annexation of the Transvaal, which had taken place on the 12th April, six days previously. My first contact with South Africa thus coincided with an event which was unfortunately destined to exercise, during subsequent years, a disturbing effect upon the peaceful progress and development of that con-

tenant. We arrived in Natal some ten or twelve days later. It is a fact worth noting that at that time railway enterprise in South Africa was represented by some sixty miles in the immediate neighbourhood of Capetown, and some four or five miles in Natal, while, although there was a telegraph wire at work between Capetown and Kimberley, there was no telegraphic communication of any kind between the two British colonies. As for cable communication with Europe, such a thing had hardly entered into the imagination of the most progressive South African colonist.

My work as editor of the *Natal Witness*—a journal at that time published only twice a week—was comparatively uneventful till the commencement of the Zulu troubles at the end of 1878. Actual contact with South Africa during nearly two years had given me, as was only natural, considerable insight into that country's affairs. I had become acquainted with the real facts of the Transvaal annexation, and I had come to recognise the danger and inappropriateness of any "forcing" policy in South Africa. Hence I took what was then in Natal the unpopular side in condemning the policy that led to the Zulu War, and in advocating the reconsideration, at any rate, of the annexation of the Transvaal. My adoption of that line of policy brought me into

somewhat unpleasant collision with the proprietor of the *Witness*, who, from a commercial point of view—have we not seen the same thing on a larger scale in England?—wished to keep in agreement with the Colonial majority. I had my consolations, however. I was able to supplement a very inadequate salary by doing a large amount of work for the *Daily Telegraph*. In a letter to my wife, who was then in Capetown, dated the 16th June, 1879, I find the following passage :

“I am horribly busy, but to good purpose. I have already made something like £100 out of the D. T., and am enjoying the luxury of paying off bills.”

I had also the satisfaction of knowing that the attitude I adopted had the warm approval of Sir Henry Bulwer, then Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, with regard to whom Mr. Herbert Gladstone, writing to me from Oxford on the 3rd June, 1879, expressed the opinion that he would prove to be “the only man in official authority in South Africa who had kept his head.” That opinion was no more than just ; for Sir Henry Bulwer had done his utmost to put the brake on Sir Bartle Frere’s forcing policy, and had particularly distinguished himself by the appointment of a commission to investigate the boundary dispute between the Zulus and the Transvaal, then represented by

De la

Sir Theophilus Shepstone as Administrator, the result of the investigation being to show that the claims put forward by the Zulus were in the main well-founded.

In December, 1879, I gave up the editorship of the *Natal Witness* and went to Capetown, to conduct a new paper to be shortly started there. The history of that undertaking, which, for want of business management and financial backing, ended in a miserable failure, was given at length in a letter I addressed to the *Cape Times*, and which was published by that journal on the 15th June, 1880. There is no need to refer to this matter at any great length. The record of all the circumstances still exists, and the accuracy of that record has never been challenged. I may, however, quote one or two passages from it, which will serve to show how the enterprise began, and why it came to a termination :

“In September, 1879, while editing the *Natal Witness* at Maritzburg, I entered into correspondence with Mr. Merriman on the subject of South African politics. I pointed out that the time seemed to be coming for moderate and independent politicians to show front, and to inaugurate a ‘positive’ South African policy, as opposed to the Imperial policy which was, apparently, being thrust upon the country. I pointed out that an essential and necessary part of such action was the establishment of a newspaper that would represent this party ; that this newspaper ought to be, for political and geographical reasons, published in Cape-

town ; and that of the two papers already established there, while the *Cape Times* was on the other side, the peculiar tone of the native policy of the *Argus* tended to impair its general influence. I admitted that my position in Natal was not altogether comfortable, and that I should not much regret to leave it. At the same time, I insisted that the great thing was to get the undertaking started, and that if a better man than myself could be found to fill the editorial chair, I should be quite content to be left out of the matter.

“Mr. Merriman’s reply (dated September 29), was more than flattering. He professed that nothing would give him more hope for future political success than to have my ‘powerful pen’ in the South African metropolis. He informed me that several of Mr. M’Loughlin’s friends who believed in him were talking of starting or supporting a newspaper ; that it was felt that, after recent events, Mr. M’Loughlin’s name as editor would be prejudicial to the undertaking ; but that if I would consent to act as editor in conjunction with Mr. M’Loughlin as manager, success might be expected. He went on to say that he had shown my letter to several friends, amongst others, to Mr. Molteno (afterwards Sir John Molteno), who was a ‘warm admirer’ of mine, and he believed the upshot would be that proposals would be made to me.”

Mr. M’Loughlin had been editor of the *Cape Argus* (then Mr. Saul Solomon’s paper), and had been dismissed from his post—many persons thought unjustly—owing to his supposed authorship of a somewhat scurrilous political pamphlet. I was myself, going upon what I had heard, quite prepared to believe that Mr. M’Loughlin was innocent in the matter.

"In spite of this conviction, however, I wrote to Mr. Merriman in the plainest terms, saying that if the new paper was to be started for Mr. M'Loughlin's benefit, I would have nothing whatever to do with it. A paper so started, I said, must fail, and I could not afford to have to do with a failure. On the other hand, I said if persons of means and respectability were starting a paper on the political lines I had sketched out, and were anxious to do Mr. M'Loughlin a good turn by placing him in the position of business manager, I would not allow that to be a bar to my working alongside him as editor. It was only reasonable to suppose that if gentlemen like Mr. Merriman and (as I then believed) Mr. Molteno did not object to this connection, I might myself safely venture. At the same time I declared that the undertaking must be soundly based ; that to ensure success at least £4,000 capital was needed ; and that unless these conditions were fulfilled, I would not connect myself with the affair."

I was led to believe that my stipulations had been complied with, and went from Natal to Capetown, to learn, before I had been there a week, that the actual condition of things was exactly what I had said I would not agree to, and that the undertaking was, in point of fact, financially rotten. I resolved to proceed without delay to England, to take my chance in journalism there. Nevertheless, at Mr. Merriman's earnest request, I consented to remain and give the thing a trial. In spite, however, of all I could do in the way of hard work, the financial rottenness of the undertaking pulled it down in the course of a very few months. Mr. Merriman and others, whose political interests

I was anxious to serve, repudiated the pledges they had given me, and in June, 1880, not without some difficulty, I left Capetown for England.

In England, I was fortunate enough to obtain, almost immediately, an introduction to Mr. John Morley, who had, a few months previously, assumed the editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Besides my introduction, I had the strong support of Sir Henry Bulwer, who had retired from the governorship of Natal, and who, I believe, called on Mr. Morley to recommend me to his notice. The result was that between July and Christmas, 1880, I did a large amount of work of all kinds for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, though my work began to diminish in quantity when, towards the end of 1880, Mr. Stead joined the *Pall Mall* staff. At Christmas time, however, while my friend Mr. P. W. Clayden was temporarily editing the *Daily News*, and with the consent of the then editor, Mr. Frank H. Hill, I formed a connection with that journal. The Transvaal War of Independence breaking out immediately afterwards, my knowledge of South African affairs and geography became especially valuable, and from Christmas, 1880, up to the conclusion of the peace at Laing's Nek, in March, 1881, I wrote for the *Daily News* not only all the topographical notes relating to the war, but also all the leading articles on the same

subject. In all I wrote—and I am glad to say that, up to the signing of the terms of peace at Laing's Nek, this was the policy advocated by the *Daily News*—three things were insisted on as essential to the satisfactory settlement of the South African question. These were (1) the promotion of racial harmony ; (2) the adoption of a policy of conciliation by Great Britain towards the Dutch populations ; and (3) the strictest limitation of direct Imperial interference. These points were also insisted on in an article I contributed, at Mr. John Morley's request, to the *Fortnightly Review* for March, 1881, under the title of "How to get out of South African Difficulties." The most important work, however, I did at this time was my book, "Blacks, Boers, and British," in which, for the first time, the essentially three-cornered nature of the South African problem was dwelt upon. This book, which I wrote at high pressure, a copy of the completed book being in my hands twenty days after I began to write it, attracted, I have good reason to know, Mr. Gladstone's attention.¹ What I wished to see in South Africa—what I have always wished to see—was a policy of justice and conciliation leading to

¹ I knew this, partly from Mr. John Morley, and partly from a note addressed to me from Mr. Gladstone's official residence in Downing Street.

racial unity and to the establishment of a state of things in which complete local autonomy would co-exist, without friction, with the moral ascendancy of Great Britain. What I wished to see, in fact, and should still wish to see, is the establishment in South Africa of conditions similar to those that prevail in Canada, modified only by the fact that in South Africa regard had to be paid, in certain cases, to the claims of a Republican form of constitution. Having looked forward twenty years ago to such a possibility as this—a possibility which, as I argued in a letter to Mr. Herbert Gladstone written in March, 1879, would justify the withdrawal of all Imperial troops from South Africa in five years—I naturally take a melancholy interest in the adoption, when it is too late, of the very policy for which I have always pleaded. For example, here is an extract from a leading article in the *Westminster Gazette* of the 24th October, 1900 :

“What we all profess to desire is a speedy confederation of all the South African States under British supremacy. If only after this conflict British and Dutch were willing to forget and forgive, and to settle down in amity, we could imagine many schemes which would take the sting out of annexation. We could imagine a Dominion Parliament sitting at Bloemfontein with Provincial assemblies under it, so arranged that the commercial community of the Rand would be free to manage their own affairs, and the pastoral

Boers, both of the Free State and the Transvaal, be left practically undisturbed, all alike finding new careers and fresh strength in the great governing body which would be supreme over them all. With such a constitution the question of armaments would disappear, for the Dominion Parliament representing equally British and Dutch would relieve the Imperial Government of the drain upon its resources, and take upon itself the whole duty of policing South Africa. With such a supreme authority, there would be no reason why local sentiments, and even the local flags, should not, as in other British colonies, be frankly tolerated."

A united South African Parliament meeting in Bloemfontein; the withdrawal from South Africa of all Imperial troops; the toleration of friendly Republican flags in a great South African federation—these are all things I have preached for twenty years past! More than this; the way was open, twelve or thirteen years ago, for the obtaining of all these things, with the complete goodwill of every soul in South Africa. But to talk of them now is much the same as it would be to discuss the patterns for new drawing-room curtains for a house in the last stage of disastrous conflagration.

I had no reason to complain of the reception of "Blacks, Boers, and British," so far as the Press was concerned, though I can imagine that it was not viewed with favour in the Colonial Office.¹

¹ It is curious that an incident for the mention of which I was censured by a reviewer in the *St. James's Gazette*—the forcible entrance of the Pretoria post-office by two members

The views expressed in that volume are the views which I hold to-day; and if those views were legitimate in 1881, it is difficult to understand how they can have become illegitimate twenty years later. Some passages, however, in "Blacks, Boers, and British" seem so singularly appropriate to the situation at the present moment that I cannot refrain from quoting them. Thus on page 204 :

"To some it may have seemed an impossibility, a monstrosity, that a nation pluming itself above all things on its independence should seek to coerce into subjection a people equally independent with itself—monstrous that, at the very first whisper of protest and dissent, there should not have been some effort made at impartial inquiry to see whether the nation was or was not on the verge of the commission of a crime. Nations, however, have their irrational moments as well as individuals—their times of fever, when they deny all the principles by which they have been accustomed to live, and plunge into deeds the results of which can never be entirely effaced."

Here again, on page 254 :

"The English colonist has always lived on the best terms with the Dutch settler, and always would do so, unless wicked strife and dissension are stirred up between them—*unless some successor of Sir Bartle Frere puts into practical force the maxim that English and Dutch are natural enemies in South Africa*, just as Sir Bartle Frere himself put the maxim into force that black and white are natural enemies."

of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's staff—turned up again quite recently in an article published in the *Westminster Gazette* of the 25th October, 1900.

The terms of peace were signed at Laing's Nek on the 23rd March, 1881. Up to that moment Mr. Gladstone's influence and spirit had dominated the political situation, and had been represented in the articles I contributed to the *Daily News*. The moment the terms of peace were signed, however, the Gladstone tap was turned off in the *Daily News* office, and the Colonial Office tap was turned on. One result of this was that my articles regarding South Africa were no longer in demand, the subject being entrusted to the late Mr. F. W. Chesson, Secretary to the Aborigines' Protection Society. The aim of the Government thenceforward seemed to be not so much to settle the South African question on a wide basis and by a generous policy, as to cut down as far as possible the terms of the peace already agreed on.

Such a policy as this seemed to me to be altogether undesirable, inasmuch as it threatened to undo all the good that might otherwise be expected to result from the recent conclusion of peace. The publication of my "Blacks, Boers, and British" having given me some *status* as an authority on South African questions, I addressed more than one letter to Mr. Gladstone, drawing his attention to considerations which, as it seemed to me, ought not to be lost sight of in dealing with South African matters in the future. In order to show what my

aims were, I will quote one or two passages from these letters. The first occurs in a letter dated the 8th April, 1881 :

“I cannot better explain myself than by stating my conviction that there are tendencies and natural influences existing in South Africa which, if left to themselves, with a little intelligent and careful guidance and encouragement superadded, will result, if not immediately, without doubt ultimately, in bringing about the formation of a general union of South African States, under the shelter of the British flag—a union self-governing and self-depending, and in which the interests of the three classes of the population—English, Dutch, and native—will be equally considered and adequately protected. I am convinced that if the South African question is, at this critical juncture, properly handled, not a soldier need be left in South Africa (unless for the protection of such naval stations as it may seem useful to keep up), and not a fear be entertained of the recurrence of any of those native wars which have from time to time desolated and disgraced South Africa since its annexation to the British Crown.”

In a letter, dated the 24th May, 1881, I dwelt on the necessity of promoting harmony between the Dutch and English races, arguing that when the two European elements were strong in being united, there was much more chance of native interests being fairly considered. The work of the Royal Commission, which had then been appointed to arrange the exact terms of the re-establishment of Transvaal independence, would, I ventured to point out, rather tend to divide than

to bring together the leading European races. "The questions," I said, "with which the Commission is mainly engaged, viz., the cession of territory, the amount of compensation to British residents, the degree of interference in native affairs, are all questions which, owing to the circumstances of the case, are regarded from opposite points of view by British and Dutch. . . . On all the three above-mentioned points the Boers feel bound to assume an attitude of protest. . . . A more general argument against the success of the work of the Commission is to be found in the fact that whereas, if granted in December last, it would have been to the Boers the exponent of England's generosity, it is now of necessity an exponent of a desire—apparent or real—to cut down the generous gift of independence within as narrow limits as possible."

"The Commission [I proceeded to say], under these circumstances, will be regarded with heartiness and good-will by no section of the population. Its decisions will satisfy no one, and provide no security whatever for a permanent peace. Dutch and English will be as distant from each other as ever; no means will be present for assuring the well-being and contentment of the native population; and the country will continue to be a source of anxiety and expense to Her Majesty's Government."

I suggested a scheme under which, by a little levelling up and levelling down, the Orange Free

State might be induced to come willingly under the protection of Great Britain, forming with the Transvaal and Natal a sort of three-cornered federation, in which (as I expressed it in a letter addressed about this time to the *Natal Mercury*) "whatever was most British would remain most British," and "whatever was most Dutch would remain most Dutch." At (I believe) Mr. Gladstone's suggestion, I had an interview with Lord Kimberley on the subject on the 11th June, 1881. Lord Kimberley, who was well acquainted with my recently published volume, did not, however, see his way to adopt my view of the situation. In a letter to him, dated the 12th June, 1881, after alluding to the risks of the then existing position, I said :

"All these dangers will be disarmed, and peace permanently secured, if Her Majesty's Government will take the lead in promoting whatever can best serve to unite the European population. By doing so, it will kindle an enthusiasm among colonists which will effectually bind them to the Crown, and induce them to offer spontaneously such guarantees in respect of the treatment of native affairs as will in every way satisfy the feeling at home."

My aim, as will thus be seen, so far from its being in the direction of the elimination of British influence from South Africa, was quite in the opposite direction. I wished to see that influence firmly established on the best possible of all bases

—the good-will of all sections of the population.
That has been my aim and wish from first to last,
and I claim for that aim and that wish the credit
due to the very highest form of patriotism.

CHAPTER VII

IN NATAL ONCE MORE

IN June, 1881, an offer reached me from the proprietor of the *Natal Witness* to return to Natal and resume my editorial work under considerably improved conditions. The offer was one which it seemed desirable to accept. The *Witness* had, during my absence in England, advanced to the dignity of a daily paper, and it was not unpleasant to find that, notwithstanding former differences with the proprietor, my services were still valued. Beyond this, owing to the diminishing of the interest felt in England in South African affairs, my work with the *Daily News* and elsewhere had dwindled considerably. There was, too, the desire I felt to be on the spot in South Africa, and to watch the course of events in which I took so warm an interest.

I sailed for South Africa again early in July, 1881, leaving my family for the time in England, and taking with me a commission to act as special correspondent for the *Daily News*. In passing

through Capetown, on my way to Natal, I made some effort to effect a reconciliation with Mr. Merriman, whose conduct towards me a year previously had not, I thought, been what it should be. I had, before leaving England, written to Sir James Sivewright, then Director of Cape Telegraphs, mentioning my wish in this respect, and asking him to act as mediator. Sir James Sivewright was not in Capetown when I arrived, but he forwarded me, from Fort Beaufort, the following message through the head of his office-staff in Capetown :

“Deliver to him [that is, to myself] the following :—‘I have just received your letter, and am very sorry indeed to be away from Capetown at the present time, as I should much like to see you. I quite concur in the views expressed in your letter, and feel certain that the course proposed is the right one to adopt, not only for the public good but for the private advantage of all concerned. Although I see when in Capetown comparatively little now of the individual named in your letter [Mr. Merriman] still it is needless for me to assure you that had I been there I would have gone at once on the errand of reconciliation suggested. My good offices in that direction or in any other direction where you think I can lend you a helping hand will always be at your service.’”

The situation, on my arriving in Natal at the end of August, 1881, was very interesting. The Royal Commission appointed to consider the details of the retrocession of the Transvaal had

done its work ; the Pretoria Convention had been signed ; and expectation was looking forward to the manner in which that Convention would be dealt with by the reassembled Volksraad. My book, "Blacks, Boers, and British," had, I found, secured me considerable popularity in Natal. It might, perhaps, have been expected that my own paper, the *Witness*, would speak of it in flattering terms. I found that almost equal approval was expressed by the *Natal Mercury*, owned and edited by Sir John Robinson, subsequently first Premier of Natal. "We wish at once to say," said the *Natal Mercury* of the 4th May, 1881, "that we think South Africa stands in debt to Mr. Statham for the book that he has written. Did we not think so it would not form our text in these columns to-day." Such an expression of opinion, coming from such a quarter, effectually disposes of certain insinuations of want of patriotism which, in quite recent times, have been levelled at the book in question. I found myself, too, on returning to Natal, on very friendly terms with the late Mr. Harry Escombe, who had then just succeeded in getting the important harbour works at Durban placed under local control, and whose premature death in December, 1899, was so severely felt throughout South Africa.

My position both as editor of the *Natal Witness*

and as special correspondent of the *Daily News* brought me in close contact with Sir Evelyn Wood, who was then filling the dual offices of Administrator of Natal and Commander-in-chief of the forces in South Africa. The situation was one in which military and political instincts were somewhat at cross-purposes. It was, perhaps, natural that military men should look forward with some sense of impatience to the possibility of a renewal of hostilities, through the failure or refusal of the Transvaal Volksraad to ratify the Pretoria Convention. On the other hand, the sincere wish of Mr. Gladstone's Government was that a peaceful settlement should be secured. Had there been, as I believe was at one time contemplated, a movement of the troops then in Natal towards the Transvaal frontier, it is quite possible that the Volksraad, regarding such movement as a threat, would reject the Convention. I have reason to believe that my telegrams to the *Daily News*, in which I pointed out that military considerations were too much dominating the situation, had some influence in checking any such movement of troops.

The situation became increasingly anxious as the date approached within which ratification of the Pretoria Convention had to be signified. When the Volksraad met, grave dissatisfaction was ex-

pressed by many members at the conditions of the Convention, which, they declared, were not in accordance with the terms of the peace signed in the previous March. Representations on the subject were made by the Volksraad to Mr. Gladstone. Knowing that this had been done, and being alive to the importance of a policy of conciliation towards the Transvaal on the part of Great Britain, on the 6th October, 1881, I sent to Mr. Gladstone, at my own expense, the following telegram :

"Splendid occasion exists to produce enthusiasm towards England by generous telegram from yourself to Volksraad, appreciating honesty course pursued, promising consideration, and expressing confidence intentions regard native population. Pardon this."

That Mr. Gladstone did not resent my action in sending this telegram is proved by the following note, which I received some weeks later :

"10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,

"*October 10, 1881.*

"SIR,—Mr. Gladstone has had the honour to receive your telegram of the 6th inst., and desires me to say that he fully recognises its aim, and the spirit in which it was sent.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"J. A. GODLEY.

"F. R. Statham, Esq."

I did more than this in the interest of peace. Knowing something of the working of political

matters in England, and realising that Mr. Gladstone might not at the moment be able to make the concessions desired by the Volksraad, I took steps to influence the Volksraad in the direction of compromise. I took these steps in conjunction with the late Mr. George Pigott Moodie, who had at one time been Surveyor-General in the Transvaal under the Republican Government, and who was then in Maritzburg. At his suggestion I drew up a telegram,¹ which he sent to a member of the Government in Pretoria, pointing out the difficulties of the situation, and urging acceptance of the Convention in the interest of peace. Mr. Gladstone's reply to the Volksraad was of a highly conciliatory nature, promising reconsideration of the provisions of the Pretoria Convention in case it proved unworkable, and on the 27th October the Convention was ratified, all the members of the Volksraad signing the resolution of ratification. The air was cleared for the moment. That something still remained to be done was, however, my

¹ Since this was written, I have come upon a copy of that telegram, which I communicated a few days later to Sir Hercules Robinson, in a letter dated the 27th October, 1881. The telegram ran as follows :—" Friends here think moment favourable for acceptance, relying on subsequent adjustment. There is reason to believe that Messrs G. and Co. are doing their best, but have their own difficulties to contend with. Tacit consideration for these would be appreciated."

profound conviction, and in the following of that conviction, I addressed, on the 13th November, 1881, a further letter to Mr. Gladstone. After thanking him for the kind way in which he had received my telegram of the 6th October, I said :

“I trust I am not wrong in believing that when this matter comes under consideration again, as it is certain to do, some effort will be made towards removing the one great grievance of the Dutch in South Africa. They complain that they have been pursued from generation to generation, and from place to place, with a calumny which they have never been allowed a chance of disproving, and upon the strength of which they have been subjected at one time and another to grievous wrongs. Even now the Convention is, to them, full of suspicions against them which they cannot but resent, and which they are powerless to refute.

“The irritation created by this state of feeling will find a vent at some time and in some way. I would ask you to believe that the Dutch in the Transvaal, while they will loyally give the convention a trial, will not be content to accept it as expressing a permanent arrangement. Twelve months from now they will, unless I am much mistaken, make formal demands for modification, and much will depend, not so much on the amount of modification accorded as upon the spirit in which the demands are considered and met. If the feelings of the Dutch upon this one subject are considered—if, for example, a statement of their own case and a fair refutation of the charges believed against them could be met by a generous expression of confidence in their intentions with regard to the native population—not only would the grievances of the past be wiped out, but the best possible protection would be secured for the native races in the future.”

To this I received a reply, dated the 28th

December, 1881, thanking me on Mr. Gladstone's behalf for my letter, and informing me that he had communicated it to the Colonial Office.

Some excitement arose in Natal towards the end of 1881 in connection with the appointment of Sir Walter Sendall (Mr. Sendall, as he then was) to the post of Lieutenant-Governor. A good deal of speculation had been indulged in as to the appointment of a successor to Sir George Colley, who had held the full powers of a Governor, and had closely identified himself with the progress and prospects of the Colony. It was therefore with a feeling of some considerable resentment that colonists learnt that the old *status* of a lieutenant-governorship was to be revived, thus pushing the Colony back to the second-class position it had previously occupied. The resentment increased when it came to be understood that Mr. Sendall was the nominee of Sir Hercules Robinson, who had then recently assumed the office of Governor and High Commissioner in Capetown. To Mr. Sendall there was no objection on any personal grounds. What was strenuously objected to was the apparent wish to subject the interests of Natal to the views of a Governor constitutionally under the influence of the Ministry in the Cape Colony—a Ministry always jealous of the commercial enterprise and the low Customs tariff that prevailed in Natal. It seemed,

in short, an endeavour to bring about a confederation between the two Colonies by a side-wind, The difficulty was met, partly by strenuous protest, and partly by the resolve on the part of the Legislature, which happened to be in session, to vote a considerably increased salary to a fully powered Governor. The suggestion for this expedient really came from the late Sir Robert Fowler, M.P., who was then paying a visit to Natal. He made the suggestion to me during the course of a dinner-party at Government House.¹ Mr. Escombe next day gave notice of a resolution to that effect in the Legislative Council; and within a week the resolution was carried, with the result that Mr. Sendall's appointment was cancelled. A strong feeling existed in the Colony in favour of the appointment of Sir Evelyn Wood, one argument in his favour being based on the respect in which he was held by the Dutch population—a respect which had been strikingly made manifest on the occasion, in November, 1881, of his laying the foundation-stone of a new Dutch Church in Maritzburg. The appointment was, indeed, offered to

¹ It was at this same dinner-party that Sir Evelyn Wood, appealed to by the military chaplain (the late Rev. G. St. M. Ritchie) expressed his deliberate opinion that the affair at Bronkhorst Spruit in December, 1880, was "a fair fight," and not, as had sometimes been represented, a massacre.

him, but he declined it, the military situation in Egypt, no doubt, presenting superior attractions.

In March, 1882, an incident occurred so extraordinary and dramatic that, if included in a work of fiction, it would run some risk of being criticised as too sensational for acceptance. The incident is thus described in a letter written to my wife, who was still in England, on the 12th March, 1882 :

“ A most extraordinary and almost incredible thing has happened. Look at the *Witness* for the 6th March, and you will see an account of an extraordinary discovery of old letters and newspapers in a loft in the roof of a building just opposite my office window. A week or two ago the verandah of this building fell, carrying part of the roof with it. On the workmen going to repair the roof, they found in a loft a number of old letters and newspapers. The building was once used as the post-office, and these were apparently letters and papers that had been returned for want of sufficient addresses, and forgotten when the post-office was shifted to the new building. A——, my junior reporter, rummaging among the old newspapers for something of interest, came across a short paragraph *relating to myself*, headed, ‘ Serious Charge against a Liverpool Clerk.’ Of course, my name is too peculiar to be easily mistaken. Instead of coming to me or to Davis [the proprietor of the *Witness*], he seems to have had some intention of keeping the matter to himself, only he could not avoid giving some mysterious hint to W—— [my sub-editor], and K—— [another member of my staff]. These two got hold of the paper and destroyed it, and hence the matter came to Davis’s ears, who, I must say, has behaved in a most delicate and gentlemanly way about it. He expressed no surprise

when the fact was mentioned to him ; said it was of no consequence ; and warned A—— that if the matter went any further he would be dismissed. It was after this that Davis mentioned the matter to me confidentially, assuring me that he did not want to know anything about it. I felt, however, that as what affects me affects the paper too, he had some right to know, and told him something about it.

"Here, for the present, the matter rests ; but there it certainly will not remain. In a place like this, what one person knows everyone knows sooner or later. Now there are at least three men in my own office who know it, and I believe it has been mentioned to someone outside. Hence, as Davis says, the thing may be thrown at me any day.

"You will ask what my own feeling is about this. It is very odd that when I heard of those letters and papers being found, the thought just flashed into my mind and out again that there might be some reference to myself among them. Honestly, I may tell you, I am not surprised. I hardly know whether I am troubled. I have always looked forward to some crisis of this kind arising, which I should either triumphantly crush or which would crush me. It seems in many ways another link in the extraordinary chain of events that I can trace all through the last ten years of my life. It depends on what the result is how I am to regard it. And yet, whatever the result is, however much my life may be, to external appearance, robbed of all its chances of success and cast under a cloud again, it cannot alter me, can it? Only this shows how right we were to do everything we did in Liverpool seven years ago, doesn't it? That is the one great and most important fact—that before ever I heard of Natal, or dreamed of leaving England, the matter was outlived in England."

The steps I took for my own protection are detailed in the letter I have quoted from. I particularly dwelt on the support I might expect from

Sir Evelyn Wood, who, when leaving Natal at the end of 1881, had offered to further my interests in return for services rendered to him.¹ I wrote to Sir Evelyn Wood detailing the circumstances, both present and past, and asking him, if he could possibly find an opportunity, to bring the matter to the personal knowledge of the Queen. My view of the situation—whether a reasonable or unreasonable view—was this: that I had rendered some service to Mr. Gladstone's Government in connection with the settlement of the Transvaal difficulty, and that if, with Her Majesty's personal knowledge of my previous history, some recognition of that service were offered me, all fear of attack would be at an end. I asked my wife, at the same time, to communicate with Sir Evelyn Wood, who had then the command at Chatham, and to submit to him whatever documents were necessary to make the matter clear to him.

As a result of my letter, Sir Evelyn Wood called on my wife in London on the 24th April, 1882. What passed on this occasion is fully recorded in a letter from my wife, dated the 27th April, 1882. Naturally, I do not feel at liberty to quote from that letter, in so far as it relates to explanations

¹ I think these services partly consisted in making it plain that he was absent from Natal (in Zululand) at the time of the popular agitation against the Sendall appointment.

communicated by Sir Evelyn Wood in confidence. The fact, however, was to be clearly gathered that my unpopularity at the Colonial Office—partly on account of “Blacks, Boers, and British,” and partly on account of the part I had taken in the agitation against Mr. Sendall’s appointment—formed an impassable barrier to any kind of official favour. I may, however, quote the following extract :

“As regards the other matter, we had a little quiet talk about it, and I think he quite understands, and was very nice. He says I may tell you from him that he does not see that you have anything to fear; and even if anything *is* thrown at you out there, you have made your position there, and worked hard and won esteem and respect, and nothing of the kind could really injure you, putting aside the fact that the whole matter was nearly twenty years old, and considering also the letters I had shown him, etc. He spoke confidently of your taking office sooner or later, saying, indeed, that he did not think you could well do otherwise. Mr. Escombe would like you to work with him, and then he added : ‘You know, your husband is so clever.’ He also said : ‘Mrs. Statham, the reason why I admire your husband is that I have always felt that he was thoroughly conscientious, even if he occasionally made mistakes.’ I gleaned from what he said that he had rather I conveyed all this to you from him than he write himself. Possibly he may send you a line, but don’t be surprised if he does not. I think we can understand his feeling, and your not hearing direct from him would certainly not mean any slight to yourself.”

I had at the same time consulted my old friend, Mr. P. W. Clayden, who had long been

acquainted with all my earlier history, on the subject. Writing to me on the 24th April, 1882, he said :

“I do hope that you will not allow your position to be made untenable. It will only be so from your own sensitiveness—a feeling which does you honour, but which, in the circumstances, must be resisted and overcome. . . . It would be better, I am sure, to tell the whole story to the world than to be crushed by its secret repetition.”

I had, of course, no intention whatever of running away or allowing my position to be rendered untenable. Besides this, the active interest I was then taking in the political affairs of Natal and of South Africa generally enabled me to push more personal questions out of sight. Mr. Escombe was engaged in framing certain proposals for constitutional reform which, while not all at once placing upon the Colony the full burden of Responsible Government, would give colonists a larger control over the Executive. At the same time, he took, by resolutions passed in the Legislative Council, the first step ever taken in South Africa towards the establishment of a Customs' Union. In all these matters I worked in complete harmony with Mr. Escombe, and though his proposals for reform were only partially accepted by the Legislature, their discussion formed a very interesting episode in the political history of Natal.

At the end of October, 1882, the matter which

had caused me some anxiety in the previous March was again forcibly brought to my notice. On the 28th October, there had appeared in the *Witness*, under the heading of "The Maritzburg Spring Meeting," a harmless *jeu d'esprit*, in the shape of an imaginary list of horses supposed to have been entered for the approaching races by various well-known persons, the character of each being hit off in the supposed name and pedigree of the horse entered. In all quarters but one the list caused amusement. I was surprised the next day, therefore, to receive by post the following communication :

"PIETERMARITZBURG, *October 28, 1882.*

"SIR,—There are in this Colony four persons who are perfectly well acquainted with all the circumstances attendant upon the interesting event of the 30th November, 1865. A duly attested certificate of that day's proceedings is in the hands of one of them, and another is prepared to swear to your identity with the hero of that occasion. One of the four is among the functionaries insulted in that exquisite product of your good taste which appears in to-day's *Witness*, under heading, 'The Maritzburg Spring Meeting.' That insult is peculiarly gratuitous in *his* case, since, far from showing you any unkindness, he has gone out of his way to afford you hospitality. But that is, perhaps, a sufficient title to your contempt.

"*'Verbum sapienti satis.'* Not one of the four has been desirous to injure you or to disinter the past. But all are human; and there are limits to human endurance. Do not transgress them.—I am, sir, yours truly,

"THE GHOST OF CARLYLE (*not* the historian).

"F. R. Statham Esq."

Carlyle (or Carlisle) was the name of a well-known member of the Liverpool police force, who had been concerned with my arrest in 1865. Internal evidence showed me that the person from whom the letter proceeded could be none other than a "functionary" holding a high official position,¹ while reference to other persons enabled me to identify the handwriting as that of his wife. The *Witness* next day contained the following paragraph :

"THE GHOST OF CARLYLE.—The writer of an anonymous letter with the above signature is informed that the handwriting has been identified, and that any further attempts of the same sort will result in unpleasant and unexpected consequences."

This paragraph was the means of producing a further anonymous communication in the same handwriting :

"Your threat of yesterday does not affect the writer, who bears you no personal ill-will, and whose warning was a kindness to yourself. Discharge your high editorial trust with due regard to honour, decency, and public morality, and, so far as the writer is concerned, you will be reminded no more of the past."

¹This gentleman now occupies a similar position in another Colony. Internal evidence, coupled with a knowledge of the fact that he was in England in October, 1900, leads me strongly to suspect his connection with the attack in the *Daily Express*.

That second communication also received its reply through the columns of the *Witness* of the 1st November, 1882.

“THE GHOST OF CARLYLE is informed that his reassurance is quite unnecessary, and that legal opinion has been taken as to the best way of dealing with persons of his description.”

The legal opinion I took was that of Mr. Theophilus Shepstone, jun. (commonly known as “Offy”). Consultation with him, of course, involved communicating to him a knowledge of the events of 1865. At the time he was highly indignant with the writer of the anonymous letters and warmly sympathetic (as I find from a letter to my wife dated the 5th November, 1882) as regards myself, his view of the matter coinciding with that expressed by Sir Evelyn Wood and Mr. P. W. Clayden. When, a few months later, a serious breach arose, on public grounds, between members of his family and myself, I was tempted to fear that he had betrayed my confidence. Subsequent information induced me to correct this impression, and its correction led, a few years later, to a reconciliation which I am glad to remember. As for the writer of the anonymous letters, within twelve months he had accepted an appointment elsewhere.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY OF A CONSPIRACY

DURING the year 1882 the question of the re-settlement of Zululand had been occupying no small share of attention both in England and in Natal. The Zulu question was, like the Transvaal question, one of the legacies left to Mr. Gladstone's Government by its predecessors in office. The settlement arranged by Lord Wolseley in 1879, under which thirteen chiefs with equal authority divided Zululand among them, had conspicuously failed. Whether or not it was contrived to that end, on the principle of the "Kilkenny cats," it had undoubtedly led to much bloodshed and disturbance. All through 1882 two parties were pulling different ways. A considerable party in the House of Commons, usually spoken of as the philanthropic party, believed that the only cure for the disorder was Cetywayo's restoration. An active party in Natal, representing indeed the majority of Natal colonists, believed that the only cure lay in out-and-out annexation. The former party was

fed by frequent communications from Bishop Colenso ; the latter was championed by Mr. John Robinson—as he then was—proprietor of the *Natal Mercury* and correspondent of the *London Times*. Sir Henry Bulwer, on arriving in Natal as the first Governor under the newly established conditions, found himself, in respect of Zululand, awkwardly placed between these two parties, his own convictions being in favour of the maintenance of the *status quo* as arranged by Lord Wolseley.

The position of the question in the middle of 1882 is very well indicated in the following passage in a letter addressed to me by the late Mr. F. W. Chesson, Secretary to the Aborigines' Protection Society, on the 7th June in that year. He said :

“There is a strong feeling growing up in the House of Commons as to the mismanagement by the Government of the Zulu question. Sir Wilfrid Lawson's motion is rather low down on the notice paper, and cannot come on for some time to come ; but the delay will, it is believed, strengthen his position. The breach of faith to Cetuyayo has excited much animadversion, and the conduct of Sir H. Bulwer in the matter will be subjected to no very sparing criticism. What you fail to understand in Natal is that any attempt to establish British authority in Zululand would practically break up the Liberal party.”

Things were thus hanging in the balance when the annexation party, by exaggerating the disorder in Zululand in the interest of their own policy,

compelled the Government to do something, that something being the restoration of Cetywayo, who was forthwith summoned to England on his famous visit. Referring to this visit, Mr. Chesson, writing to me on the 17th August, 1882, said :

“ He [Cetywayo] has produced a very favourable impression upon all who have been brought into contact with him. The Queen was much pleased with him, and to-day the Prince of Wales received him with much cordiality.”

In a later letter :

“ Cetywayo's frankness and intelligence have completely neutralised the effect of Mr. ——'s efforts to prevent his restoration.”

By the beginning of 1883, it began to be plain both in England and in Natal that Cetywayo was not getting fair play, and that arrangements were being made in Zululand which could only lead to confusion. Who was really responsible for those arrangements, whether Sir Henry Bulwer or Sir Theophilus Shepstone, it might not be easy to say. It seems not altogether improbable that Sir Henry Bulwer, displeased at the throwing over of the arrangement which he believed to be the most satisfactory—Lord Wolseley's arrangement—left the matter to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. It was my misfortune to be at the time in strong opposition to both ; and in reviewing the matter now, I

cannot lose sight of a reconciliation effected in both cases at a later period. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Bulwer was in England held responsible for the settlement, and the impression it created is indicated in the following passage in a letter from Mr. Chesson, dated the 4th January, 1883:

"There is, as you will imagine, a strong feeling here about Sir H. Bulwer's resettlement of Zululand. The Liberal party is filled with dismay at the weakness of the Government in yielding to the influence of a man who was known to be hostile to their policy. What Sir Henry Bulwer fails to understand is that, while there are a hundred questions connected with South Africa which the British public are content to leave to men who belong to the official class, this is a subject with regard to which the nation has developed something like a conscience. When Parliament and the country made up their minds to restore Cetywayo, they intended the restitution to be complete, and had not the faintest idea that Sir Henry Bulwer would be allowed to enact a new partition of Zululand."

My fears for the result of the proposed scheme—fears amply justified by subsequent events—led me to use such influence as I could command to secure its modification. On the 23rd December, 1882, I addressed a letter to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, dwelling on what I regarded as the weak points in the settlement, from a parliamentary point of view, particularly the arrangement under which it might easily be made to seem that part of Zululand was being annexed for the benefit of

Natal. My hope was that Sir Theophilus Shepstone, out of regard for his own reputation, would use his influence to modify the objectionable points in the settlement, and I suggested an alternative course by which the same result might be obtained, viz., an outlet for the crowded native population in Natal, without the Imperial Government having incurred any fresh responsibilities.¹ A day or two later—on the 1st January, 1883—I sent the following note to Mr. Theophilus Shepstone, jun. I quote it here in order to show how anxious I was to act straightforwardly in the matter :

“I called at your office on Saturday with a blank cheque, for the purpose of asking you to get my promissory note back from the bank. Will you kindly get it for me to-morrow? It is only right that I should tell you my reason for this. I feel obliged to oppose, both here and in England, the proposed settlement of Zululand. I have not endeavoured, and shall not endeavour, to lay the chief responsibility on your father, but it will probably be impossible to exclude him from what I have said, and may be obliged to say. And you will easily understand that I could not feel properly free to discharge what seems to me to be a public duty if I were under any obligation to any member of your family.”

The cancelling of a financial accommodation was not particularly convenient at the moment, but it seemed unavoidable.

¹ My letter to Sir T. Shepstone, and his reply, were printed in the appendix to my pamphlet, “The Zulu Iniquity,” published in 1884.

The story of the misfortunes of the Zulus does not properly come within the scope of my present endeavour. That story will be found related in all its fulness in Miss Frances Colenso's book, "The Ruin of Zululand," published in 1884. My communications to the *Daily News*, however, played a very considerable part in the agitation that arose among members of the House of Commons with regard to the proposed settlement. In a letter to me dated the 18th January, 1883, Mr. Chesson said :

"We had a committee meeting [of the Aborigines' Protection Society] yesterday, Mr. Dillwyn in the chair. I was requested to collect the more important of your telegrams, and send copies of them to Lord Derby, with an earnest request that he would take steps to vindicate the good name of the country."

Lord Derby had gone to the Colonial Office, as successor to Lord Kimberley, at the beginning of the year, but it was known that he had nothing to do with the arrangements in Zululand. Meantime, the *Daily News*, having access through Mr. Chesson to the reports sent to England by Bishop Colenso, was prepared to support my view of the situation. How serious the matter was becoming for the officials concerned is to some extent indicated in a letter from Mr. Chesson, dated the 7th June, 1883 :

"I have received from the Bishop [Dr. Colenso] very full information concerning the outrageous and astonishing things which have taken place in Zululand. I need not say more on that subject, except to thank you for all you have done in this matter, and to assure you that, being in possession of a tolerably complete case, we shall leave no stone unturned to get justice done. We shall demand a thorough and impartial inquiry by persons who have nothing to do with Natal or Zululand."

That impartial inquiry was the very thing for which I had been working, and it may readily be believed that a section of the House of Commons which had been influential enough to secure Cetwyway's restoration might also be influential enough to secure for him the fair treatment which he was certainly not receiving. As the institution of such an inquiry would of necessity imply the censure, and possibly the supersession, of high officials in Natal, it was incumbent on those officials to make some effort for their own protection. The first step taken in this direction was a despatch from Sir Henry Bulwer to Lord Derby (No. 49 in Blue Book, C— 3616), complaining generally of the character of my communications to the *Daily News*, and suggesting that representation should be made to the managers of that journal. Such representation was not made; but towards the end of April, Mr. Evelyn Ashley, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, in

replying to a question in the House of Commons, denounced my communications to the *Daily News*, stating that I was never well-informed, and implying that I had been in the habit of supplying that paper with false information.

The news of this attack reached me, by telegraph from Capetown, towards the end of May. I immediately wrote to the *Daily News*, defending and justifying my position,¹ being not then aware that the attack was founded on an official despatch from Natal. A few days later I received the following letter from Mr. F. H. Hill, then editor of the *Daily News* :

“ ‘ DAILY NEWS ’ OFFICE, LONDON,
“ May 1, 1883.

“ DEAR MR. STATHAM,—You have probably seen by this time that some of your telegrams have been very emphatically and rudely contradicted in the House of Commons by Mr. Evelyn Ashley, who has had the discourtesy to say that you are never well-informed, and that you make a practice, and for a long time past have made a practice, of telegraphing false intelligence. This statement was at once challenged by the *Daily News*, and I have had some correspondence with him and with Lord Derby, who has sent me a copy of a despatch from Sir Henry Bulwer as to the character of your correspondence. You will see from the enclosed letter of Lord Derby’s that he admits the fairness of my request that you should see the despatch, which will at once be forwarded to you.

¹ Published in the appendix to my pamphlet, “The Zulu Iniquity.”

"I imagine that you will have to treat it as entirely confidential, and that you will not be at liberty to make any use of its contents in your own paper. But it will be an advantage to you and to the *Daily News* that such answer as you are able to make should be in our possession if your correspondence and telegrams are further challenged, or if Sir Henry Bulwer's despatch should be published.—Faithfully yours,
"FRANK H. HILL."

Lord Derby's note, dated 30th April, ran as follows :

"I think it is only fair that your correspondent at Maritzburg should see Sir H. Bulwer's despatch, which you are free to forward him accordingly.

"I did not understand Mr. Ashley's words to reflect on the truthfulness or honour of the correspondent in question, but solely upon his accuracy."

As soon as I had read Sir Henry Bulwer's despatch, I felt able to telegraph to Mr. Hill, asking him to inform Lord Derby that I had a complete answer to it. The fact of my having thus telegraphed was referred to in the *Daily News* at the time. I further suggested that Sir Henry Bulwer's despatch should be asked for in the House of Commons, in anticipation of the arrival of my detailed reply, which, dated the 3rd June, 1883,¹ reached England about the end of that month.

That reply was never published. While it was

¹ Printed in the appendix to "The Zulu Iniquity."

on its way to England, two things had happened. In the first place, secret attacks, founded upon what had occurred in Liverpool in 1865, had been made upon my personal character. In the next place, Bishop Colenso had died. These attacks would probably have been made in any case. The death of Bishop Colenso enabled them to be successful. "Both Chesson and I fear," Mr. P. W. Clayden wrote me from London on the 2nd July, 1883, "that Colenso's death will be a great blow to you." The anticipation was correct. Bishop Colenso died on the 20th June, and on the same day, I should imagine within an hour of the arrival in the *Daily News* office of my telegram announcing his death, a letter was written to me dispensing with my services as *Daily News* correspondent.

The inner history of the intrigue that succeeded in securing my displacement as *Daily News* correspondent, and in thus freeing Natal officials from criticism, is curious. Not the least curious point about it is the fact that in all probability I owed my knowledge of its existence and nature to an accident. Some time in May, 1883, Sir James Sivewright, who held the post of Consulting Engineer to the Natal Government Telegraphs, happened to be in Maritzburg. In a conversation with me, he referred to the attitude I had taken up


in respect of the Zulu question, and said significantly, "It will do you no good." Thinking over this remark, it occurred to me that he might be aware of some personal attack to be made upon me, and in anticipation of any such attack, I wrote to Mr. P. W. Clayden, reminding him of the manner in which I had lived down the incident of 1865, so that in the event of such an attack being made, the means for reply might be at hand. On the 2nd July, 1883, he replied to me as follows :

"Your letter to the *Daily News* [my letter of defence] has not been published, and, I fear, will not be. . . . The matter of which you speak in the letter received to-day has become common to everybody. When Merriman was here, it seems to have been his policy to tell the story, and I have heard some exaggerated versions of it, which I have, of course, contradicted. All this is inevitable. I foresaw and feared it, in my own mind, as soon as I saw you were getting into the quarrels of politics. But nothing was heard of it till Merriman came, and I understand that he mentioned it to some people who circulated it at once."¹

The appearance of Mr. Merriman in this capacity as the agent of an act of moral assassination—an act which aimed at my removal out of the way without my ever knowing by what means or through whom—is in itself a matter still requiring some

¹ This statement regarding Mr. Merriman was confirmed by Mr. Clayden, in a conversation I had with him on the 29th October, 1887. "There's no doubt," he then said, "that Merriman did you a great deal of injury."

explanation. Mr. Merriman, I am convinced, was himself ignorant of my earlier history, and he had no direct interest in making such an attack. He was at the time a member of the Cape Ministry, which was in no way concerned with the settlement of Zululand. It might have been thought, too, that in view of the injury he had done me in 1880, and in view also of my move towards a reconciliation in the following year, he would have been unwilling to lend himself to such an attack. The explanation of his action is, I think, to be found in the fact that he was willing to do a service for Sir Theophilus Shepstone in return for services rendered by Sir Theophilus Shepstone to himself and his colleagues in the Cape Ministry. In April, 1883, Sir Theophilus Shepstone left Natal on a visit to England, one of the main objects of that visit being, doubtless, to counteract the influence of those who were criticising the Zulu settlement. From Capetown to England, he was a fellow-passenger with Mr. Merriman, who, with his colleagues in the Cape Ministry, was anxious to induce the Imperial Government to reassume control of Basutoland. That was a matter in respect of which the support of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, a reputed expert in native affairs, might be of great service. On the other hand, by attacking me and discrediting me as *Daily News* corre-



spondent, Mr. Merriman might be of great service to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and all the more readily because Mr. Merriman had himself once been the South African correspondent of the *Daily News*. If Sir Theophilus Shepstone attacked me, his motives would be open to suspicion. Mr. Merriman could attack me with all the effectiveness natural to an apparently independent position. Even that attack, I believe, would have failed had it not been for Bishop Colenso's death. When he died, I was, as a man without friends—not as a man who had merited censure—thrown overboard.

This attack in London, however, by no means represented the whole of the efforts of Natal officials for my destruction. They designed also, having cut off my retreat in England, to ruin me in Natal. The *Natal Witness* had published certain statements—statements which had been embodied in an official complaint—with regard to the conduct of a certain member of the Shepstone family in Zululand. An action for libel was brought theoretically against the proprietors of the *Witness*, but practically against me, in respect of these statements, an offer being privately made to withdraw the action if I were summarily dismissed—an offer which, however, was not accepted. Lord Derby, in a letter addressed to a personal friend of mine—the late Dr. Martineau—in England, denied

that that action was "instituted by, or by direction of, Her Majesty's Government." Lord Derby, however, knew perfectly well—unless, indeed, letters which ought to have reached him were withheld—(1) that it was represented to him that, owing to popular prejudice and official influence, a fair trial of the action was impossible in Natal; (2) that he was asked at the very least to give some guarantee that Zulus who might be required as witnesses should not be officially interfered with; (3) that he declined to interfere in the matter at all; (4) that Zulus who, knowing that the trial was to take place, were coming of their own accord to give evidence, were officially detained at a distance from Maritzburg; and (5) that a *fortnight after the trial was over*, and a verdict given for the plaintiff, an official note was addressed to the defendants' attorney, asking if these witnesses were wanted.

It was under these conditions—under the pressure of a deliberate scheme for my complete ruin in revenge for my independent criticism of the Zululand settlement—that I published the pamphlet, "The Zulu Iniquity," to which reference has several times been made. The pamphlet was seen through the press in England by Mr. F. E. Colenso, and his letter of instructions to the publishers, a copy of which I possess, shows that 800 copies were distributed to members of Parlia-

ment and leading newspapers. About the same time I published my book, "Free Thought and True Thought"—a book actually written in 1873 as a summary of my experience in Edinburgh, and which is largely a justification of popular Christianity from an evolutionary point of view. The publication of my pamphlet, containing as it did a full statement of the Liverpool incident of 1865, was regarded by many of my friends as a mistake. I have, however, always been convinced to the contrary.

CHAPTER IX

RETURNING LIGHT

IT was not easy to continue working under all the adverse conditions which prevailed at the commencement of 1884. The *Daily News* having refused to allow me to justify myself, still less was the Colonial Office disposed to afford me any such opportunity. Besides this, the position I had taken up in respect of the Zulu settlement was anything but popular in Natal, although it was entirely sympathised with by an influential few, including the late Mr. Escombe. There were, too, my relations with the proprietor of the *Witness* to be considered. An appeal to the Privy Council had been filed in respect of the libel action above alluded to, and until that appeal had been heard I could not be sure what claim might not be made on me in respect of the damages awarded. Still, the position was not altogether without gleams of light. I found considerable sympathy and approval in quarters where such sympathy and approval were most to be valued. For instance, the late Matthew

Arnold, writing to me on the 9th September, 1883, although he did not see his way to intervene in my behalf at the Colonial Office, said: "I do not think that that old story ought to tell in the least against you now." I found also that I had the very strong sympathy, in respect of the publication of my pamphlet, of the late Sir Charles Mitchell (subsequently Governor of the Straits Settlements), who was then Colonial Secretary of Natal. Quite recently, too, other correspondence has convinced me that the sympathy was very much more widely extended than I was then perhaps aware.

The publication of my pamphlet was the means, moreover, of bringing me very important information on another point. When that pamphlet was written I was not in the least aware whether or not there might be some legal disability attaching to my position, by reason of the events of 1865. On this point I received spontaneous reassurance from Sir Michael Gallwey, then Attorney-General, and now Chief Justice of Natal, who, by referring me to the judgments delivered a few years previously in the case of "*Leyman versus Latimer*," enabled me to see that any apprehensions I might have had on this score were groundless. My moral right to live down the incident of 1865, I had always felt assured of; the judgments in the

case quoted assured me that my legal right was equally incontestable. The knowledge I obtained on this point enabled me to feel all the more certain that I had adopted the right course, first, in insisting on living down the prejudice against me in the place where it had originated, and next, in publishing for all the world the story that, as I knew, had been secretly made use of against me.

I had, moreover, still more solid causes for congratulation. The advent of Lord Derby to the Colonial Office, while it certainly had exercised no very favourable influence on my personal concerns, had exercised a very important influence, in a direction peculiarly satisfactory to me, upon South African affairs in general. The relations between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal, during the period immediately following on the ratification of the Pretoria Convention, had not been happy. That Convention had proved, as I fully expected would be the case, the cause of continual friction. Under Lord Kimberley there was constant bickering on every little point on which difference of opinion was possible. It seemed, indeed, by no means improbable that out of these bickerings some serious conflict might arise which would undo all the good that had been done in 1881. This was particularly the case with regard to the south-western border of the Trans-

vaal, where the quarrels of native chiefs, whose rights had been interfered with by the drawing of the boundary line, threatened to involve the whole district. In a letter to my wife, written in November, 1882, I find myself taking a somewhat pessimistic view of the situation. "It is maddening," I said, "to think that a country with such splendid capabilities, should be lost and ruined by the sheer weight of blundering. Everything is said that should not be said; everything is done that should not be done; and then people in England wonder that things go wrong. Why, if the principles of Government and diplomacy that are applied to South Africa were applied to Europe, there would be a general war once a week."

When Lord Derby came to the Colonial Office early in 1883, a change for the better very soon became apparent—a change the real character of which might very well be gathered by a student of Hansard from the remarks made by Lord Derby in the House of Lords on the 24th April (the very day on which Mr. Evelyn Ashley was attacking me in the House of Commons) in reply to the Earl of Camperdown. In the course of those remarks, Lord Derby referred in cordial terms to the presence in England of a member of the Transvaal Government—Dr. Jorissen—as afford-

ing an opportunity for discussing points of disagreement. The despatch of a delegate, or delegates, to England was a matter I had been strongly urging upon the Pretoria Government in letters to Mr. J. F. Celliers, the editor of the *Volksstem*. My letters were communicated to Dr. Jorissen, who then held the post of State-Attorney, and in February, 1883, I received the following letter:

“PRETORIA, *February 15, 1883.*

“R. STATHAM, Esq., Maritzburg.

“DEAR SIR,—When our State Attorney, the Hon. Dr. Jorissen, left for Europe a fortnight ago, he handed over to me a series of very interesting letters from you to him.

“These letters have been under the most earnest consideration of our Executive. I have been charged to express the heartfelt gratitude to you of the Government for all you have done, and are still doing, in favour of our Republic and Government.

“However, at present, while the commando against Mapoch is still in the veldt, the Government would rather abstain from sending or delegating anybody to England, but would rather wait till that disturbance is over, which they fondly hope will not be far off.

“Hoping you will continue with your most valuable paper to assist so materially our cause, I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

“W. EDUARD BOK, *State Secretary.*”

I quote this letter for the purpose of showing that many years ago relations of confidence existed between the Transvaal Government and myself—

confidence, not because I ever sought to advance Transvaal interests at the expense of Great Britain, but because I was always ready to put the Transvaal case fairly, and to defend the Transvaal Government from calumny, even at the risk of my own popularity and my own financial interests.

The visit of Dr. Jorissen to England cleared the way for the visit, towards the end of 1883, of Messrs. Kruger, Smit, and Du Toit, for the purpose of considering, in accordance with the promise given by Mr. Gladstone in 1881, such modifications in the Convention between the two Governments as experience might have shown to be desirable. The negotiations were highly successful, both sides being satisfied with the result. I venture to think that this was largely owing to the fact that Lord Derby brought to the Colonial Office the principles in force at the Foreign Office. It is surely one of those principles that points of agreement shall be sought after rather than points of difference; it is another that documents shall be interpreted according to the spirit and intention of those becoming parties to them, and not according to the legal niceties of verbal expression. The courteous spirit in which the delegates were received impressed them even more than the substantial concessions they secured. Lord Derby, "cold-water engine" though he was designated by the *Times*, enabled

the Colonial Office to give a true exposition of the intentions of Mr. Gladstone and his supporters in the country, thus not only depriving the South African situation of its dangers, but also giving a fresh start to those natural tendencies towards political union on which I had dwelt in my letter to Mr. Gladstone three years previously.

The effect of the conciliatory attitude of the Imperial Government, there can be no question, at once began to be felt throughout South Africa. The Dutch populations, both in the Colonies and in the Republics, seeing that they were to be fairly and equitably dealt with, were drawn towards their British neighbours. British colonists, seeing that the Imperial Government was satisfied, discarded all idea of entertaining a grudge against the Dutch. If ever there had been anywhere among any section of the Cape Colony Dutch a feeling in favour of what may be called the pan-Republican idea, that feeling vanished completely the moment a distinctly conciliatory policy received the confirmation of the people and Parliament of Great Britain. The Dutch party in the Cape Colony, coincident very nearly with what has been called the Bond party, acquired recognition as a loyal and constitutional force, while the recognition of the Dutch language in public documents and proceedings—a recognition in exact agreement with that accorded

to the French language in Lower Canada and Mauritius—gave emphasis to the improved order of things. Everywhere throughout South Africa, racial irritations being laid aside, attention began to be turned to questions of internal development and administrative economy, prominence being given to the latter subject by the occurrence of a period of commercial depression.

The manifest acceptance by the Imperial Government of the very policy for which I had pleaded after the Transvaal war of independence, not unnaturally served to eliminate the recollection of the difficulties I had had to encounter in connection with the resettlement of Zululand—a resettlement which, as I had predicted would be the case, turned out to be no settlement at all. In 1886, however, fresh disagreement arose between the proprietor of the *Natal Witness* and myself. The appeal to the Privy Council in respect of the libel action of 1883 having been heard and rejected, an attempt was made to hold me personally responsible for the amount of the judgment and costs, reaching, if I remember right, a total of some £1,300. I resisted the attempt, well knowing that if I accepted the responsibility I should be involving myself in a sort of perpetual servitude. The disagreement was, after some little interval, adjusted, I having gained my point. It left, however,

a feeling of discomfort and irritation which was not favourable to harmonious working, and twelve months later, in July, 1887, circumstances arose which left me, if I was to retain my self-respect, no alternative but to resign my position as editor. It was not unpleasant to discover that, far from my occupying in Natal a position of unpopularity, public feeling was now entirely with me. In evidence of this, I may quote remarks made by the *Natal Mercury* (Sir John Robinson's paper)¹ in connection with my retirement. For example, on the 3rd August, 1887, the *Mercury* had the following :

"In a letter which appears elsewhere, Mr. Statham announces his retirement from the position he has so long held in connection with our local Press as editor of the *Natal Witness*. There are questions involved in this action on Mr. Statham's part which may have to be discussed upon their own merits, as questions affecting the freedom of the Press in this Colony and the attitude of the Government in regard thereto. To-day we confine ourselves to a very sincere expression of regret that any editorial misadventure should be the means of removing from the ranks of Natal journalism one of its most conspicuous ornaments. Mr. Statham years ago made his mark in this Colony as a brilliant writer, as a fearless and caustic critic, and as an uncompromising exponent of advanced political opinions and sound constitutional progress. If Mr. Statham has erred, it

¹ It will be necessary to distinguish between Sir John Robinson, the first Premier of Natal, and Sir John Robinson, late manager of the *Daily News*.

has been because he thought that the public interest was being prejudiced, and that the public cause demanded the utmost outspokenness of Press criticism."

Again, on the 20th August, the *Natal Mercury* said :

"We learn with much satisfaction that a movement is on foot to present Mr. Statham, so well known as the editor of the *Natal Witness*, with a substantial recognition of his great literary services to the Colony. No doubt many of our readers would, with ourselves, be glad to include political as well as literary service within the scope of the testimonial—as no student of our colonial affairs during recent years can be blind to the fact that Mr. Statham has contributed most materially to the spread and growth of sound constitutional ideas, and has, with an almost reckless disregard of consequences, criticised errors, misdoing, and incapacity in every quarter. His incisive pen has laid bare many a scandal, and his pungent wit has enlivened many a dull controversy ; and though everybody has at some time or other suffered from both, no one denies the efficacy of either. It is, however, as a literary man rather than as a politician that Mr. Statham's claim to recognition is being advanced by men, some of whom have been at daggers drawn with him in public matters. It is felt that he has done much to add brightness and strength to colonial journalism ; that he has been an educator of the people in the truest sense of the term ; and that he has at all times striven to extend the sphere of colonial thought and observation into the vast domain of world-wide knowledge and age-long culture. Such a service as this, rendered in a young and obscure community, existing in close contact with a pervasive barbarism, is of a value that cannot easily be defined either by figures or by words ; and when it is known that the end of such service has been loss and sacrifice, it is but meet that the people who have benefited should make some sort of

suitable requital. We sincerely trust, therefore, that the proposed testimonial may be well worthy of its object."

These kind and cordial expressions were echoed elsewhere. The day before I finally left Maritzburg for England, the following address was presented to me :

"PIETERMARITZBURG, *September 14, 1887.*

"F. R. STATHAM, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,—On the eve of your departure from the Colony, we venture to approach you with words of kindly farewell, and a desire to testify, as we do with pleasure, to the valuable services you have rendered to Natal during your long residence among us.

"We feel convinced that good will result to the Colony from the efforts you have put forth in the interests of education, literature, art, politics, and of other departments affecting colonial life and interests.

"While assuring you of our earnest desire for and interest in your future prosperity and well-being, we have to express our sincere regret that your connection with the Colony should now terminate, and we trust you will accept a purse as a token of these expressions of good-will.

"We are, dear sir, yours very faithfully,

"J. J. CHAPMAN.

S. STRANACK.

A. W. KERSHAW.

J. A. RUNCIMAN.

G. H. WILKINSON.

W. FRANCIS.

WM. WATSON.

JAMES MICHAEL EGNER.

W. C. CARMICHAEL.

(Members of Committee).

"HENRY BALE, *Hon. Sec. of Committee.*"

Mr. Henry Bale, who signed the address as Honorary Secretary to the Committee, is now Attorney-General of Natal. The monetary value of the testimonial amounted to close on £160. A paragraph that appeared in the *Natal Witness* in November, 1887, after I had left the Colony, says:

“Of this amount it is pleasing to note that £50 came from the Transvaal, and that the list of names, though a small one, included the names of President Kruger, Commandants Joubert and Smit, State Secretary Bok, and the editor of the *Volksstem*, Mr. Celliers. The testimonial must have been a peculiarly gratifying one to Mr. Statham, for his fearless pen enabled him to gain an even greater number of enemies than usually falls to the lot of a journalist. A singular circumstance is that the majority of those who showed their appreciation of his literary abilities were those who differed from him materially both in politics and other matters.”

This testimony from an essentially British community showed two things—first, that no kind of suspicion had ever been entertained as to my loyalty to British interests; next, that I had once more lived down any prejudice that might have been awakened by the resuscitation of the memories of more than twenty years before. As regards my work in Natal during my nine or ten years' connection with the *Natal Witness*, it included, besides all matters relating

to constitutional progress and reform, special association with the consolidation of the public debt of the Colony, the establishment of colonial scholarships to English universities, the progress of the harbour works, railway extension and development, the maintenance of a low tariff, the institution of a low scale of transit duties on articles carried over the colonial railways to the interior states, the advocacy of a South African Customs union, the advancement of higher education, and the preservation, without loss to the revenue, of the system of free postage for newspapers printed in the Colony. I had, too, been specially connected with all movements having to do with artistic or literary interests. It was not only in Natal, moreover, that my work received recognition in 1887. My way to England from Natal lay, of course, through Capetown, and when passing through Capetown I found that I had gained quite as much appreciation from the leaders of the Afrikaner party. In Capetown I met Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, and in a letter to my wife, dated about the 21st September, 1887, I find the following passage :

" Last night I dined at the City Club as Hofmeyr's guest, and met De Wet,¹ Secretary for Native Affairs, and several

¹ Afterwards British Agent in Pretoria.

other leading lights of the Afrikaner party. To my surprise, Hofmeyr proposed my health after dinner, and made a very flattering but quite informal little speech."

The recognition of my work both by a British community in Natal and by the leaders of the Afrikaner party in Capetown had, however, much more in it than mere personal compliment. It was an indication of the complete success of that policy of justice and conciliation for which I had so earnestly pleaded for some eight or ten years past, which I had urged so strongly on Mr. Gladstone's attention in 1881, and which had been adopted by his Ministry when Lord Derby carried with him to the Colonial Office the traditions that guided the conduct of foreign affairs. I took some pains to emphasise this fact in an article that appeared in the *Natal Witness* on the 31st August, 1887—the day on which my connection with that journal terminated—under the title of "A Word in Parting." In that article, comparing the situation in 1877 with that existing in 1887, I pointed out that whereas in 1887 the Afrikaner party was the dominating influence in South Africa, acknowledged as a peaceable and constitutional power, working for the benefit of country and of people, in 1877 that party had no existence. The name, I said, was not altogether a good one. What it indicated, however, was this—"the exis-

tence in South Africa, irrespective of differences of birth and differences of locality, of a solid and growing party which, recognising the possibilities of the country and understanding its peculiarities, was conscious of the power to direct and organise its future, unassisted and unhindered by interference from outside." What, I asked, had brought this about? for such a result was surely not contemplated by those who in 1877 had tried to force South Africa into a ready-made scheme of confederation. My contention was that this had come about because the forces in South Africa that made for peace were stronger, if left to themselves, than the forces that made for war; because the very horror of war had emphasised more clearly the absolute necessity for peace; and because "when the political operators of 1877 heaped into the crucible all the raw and shapeless material of South African possibilities, they were doing the very thing the overruling Providence of nations intended should be done in order to set at liberty the true material of free and enlightened government"—material which I described as "the sense of common interest and the sense of that moral responsibility which insists on working out its own political salvation."¹ The concluding passages in

¹ One passage in this article, justified though it was at the moment, suggests some melancholy reflections. "Men

this article I feel it necessary to quote at length :

“ The fact to be dwelt upon is the organic change that has come over South African politics, in their widest sense, between the years 1877 and 1887—a change which was officially recognised and officially confirmed by Her Majesty’s Government at the Colonial Conference in London this year. It is not a change that prejudices or jeopardises British influence in South Africa, or loosens the ties between South Africa and the rest of the British Empire. It is a change, on the contrary, that confirms that influence and strengthens those ties, because it removes from those ties all irritating associations, and restricts the exercise of that influence within its due and proper limits. It is a change which creates in South Africa the very best conditions for progress and happiness, leaving the sense of moral and political responsibility free to grow as regards internal affairs, while at the same time, as regards external affairs, reducing to a minimum all dread of adverse foreign interference. It has been towards the realisation of this change that the arguments set forth in these columns for the last ten years have been directed. The effort has not been an easy one, nor in a certain sense profitable. It has at one time and another, as the opinions of the moment veered and shifted, alienated friends and created enemies. Yet it has nevertheless brought with it the singular pleasure that belongs to an uphill fight, not to speak of the after satisfaction of finding that what was at one time regarded as

[I said] who six years ago talked and wrote of a prospect of permanent peace were regarded somewhat in the light of lunatics, not altogether harmless. Who thinks of Majuba now ? It is no more thought of as supplying a cause of race-irritation than the fields of Fredericksburg and Gettysburg are thought of in the United States as supplying a cause of irritation to North or South.” Who could have foreseen that, twelve years after this was written, the name of Majuba would be specially invoked for the purpose of adding exasperation to a racial war ?

heresy—and very damnable heresy, too—both in Natal and Downing Street, is now accepted as orthodoxy. . . . The heretic may perhaps be considered fortunate who is able, after a ten years' disputation, to trace in newspapers and official despatches the fact that, instead of his going over to the majority, the majority has come over to him."

For myself, however, the sense of satisfaction under such circumstances had reference rather to the advantages accruing "to hundreds of thousands of all races in South Africa, not to speak of millions in England," who were likely to benefit by the establishment of the principles of reason, tolerance, patience, and kindliness, than to any thought of personal exaltation. Those principles were embodied and expressed in Mr. Gladstone's South African policy—the policy that led to the restoration of Transvaal independence in 1881, and to the signing of the London Convention in 1884. So far from that policy having failed, its success was, even as early as 1887, manifest beyond all denial or question. By that year racial differences had disappeared, and everything was making for the realisation of that dream of political union which has always been uppermost in the minds of the most sincere and competent of South African statesmen and administrators. By what means this success was neutralised, and South Africa thrown back into a cauldron of racial suspicion and mistrust, will presently be seen.

CHAPTER X

A CHAPTER OF DISAPPOINTMENT

I HAVE already made allusion to the judgments delivered in the case of "*Leyman versus Latimer*," to which my attention was drawn by the Attorney-General of Natal after the publication, in 1884, of my pamphlet entitled "*The Zulu Iniquity*." Acquaintance with those judgments assured me, as I have stated, that I not only had a moral right, but also an unassailable legal right, to live down any prejudice resulting from the occurrences of 1865. The existence of that legal right appears to be but little known, possibly because it has seldom been insisted on. It exists, however, and its existence is a matter of so much importance, from a public point of view, that it seems advisable to refer at some length to the judgments by which its existence was established.

The case of "*Leyman versus Latimer*" will be found reported in two places in the third volume of *Exchequer Reports* for 1877-78, at pages 17 and 352. The case arose out of an action for libel

brought by the editor of a Dartmouth paper against the proprietors of a Plymouth paper, which latter had referred to the plaintiff as "a felon editor." When the action was tried at the Exeter Assizes, the defendants sought to justify themselves by pleading that, as the plaintiff had at some former time been sentenced to a term of imprisonment for theft, the statement was true. Mr. Justice Blackburn, who tried the case, gave judgment for the defendants, with the view of enabling the plaintiff to appeal. The appeal came before Barons Cleasby and Pollock, in the Court of Exchequer, on the 22nd June, 1877, when Baron Cleasby read the judgment of himself and Baron Pollock. The judgment turned on the true interpretation of the 32nd chapter of Act 9, George IV. One of the sections of the Act in question runs as follows :

"And whereas it is expedient to prevent all doubts respecting the civil rights of persons convicted of felonies not capital who have undergone the punishment to which they were adjudged : Be it therefore enacted that where any offender hath been or shall be convicted of any felony not punishable with death, and hath endured, or shall endure, the punishment to which such offender hath been or shall be adjudged for the same, the punishment so endured hath or shall have the like effects and consequences as a pardon under the great seal as to the felony whereof the offender was so convicted ; Provided always that nothing herein contained, nor the enduring of such punishment, shall prevent or mitigate any punishment to which the offender

might otherwise be lawfully sentenced on a subsequent conviction for any other felony."

The question arose, then, as to the effect of pardon. Baron Cleasby, quoting from "Hawkins's Pleas of the Crown," said: "As to what is the effect of a pardon, I take it to be settled at this day that the pardon of a treason or a felony, even after a conviction or attainder, does so far clear the party from the infamy, and all other consequences of his crime, that he may not only have an action for a scandal in calling him a traitor or felon after the time of the pardon, but may also be a good witness notwithstanding the attainder or conviction, because the pardon makes him, as it were, a new man, and gives him a new capacity and credit."

Later on, Baron Cleasby said: "A man stating that another man was a felon would be listened to as informing his hearers that the man was infamous, and to be shunned; but a man who stated that another man (perhaps the editor of a newspaper, and in a respectable position) had been convicted of a felony twenty or thirty years ago, would probably himself be more condemned than the man he spoke of."

On appeal, the judgment of Barons Cleasby and Pollock was upheld, Lord Justice Bramwell, however, hesitating to accept the argument of the lower court as to the full effect of 9 Geo. IV., cap.

32. Lord Justices Brett and Cotton had no such hesitation. Lord Justice Brett pointed out that the Legislature, in supporting the view of the judges, "considered it to be proper that a person who had endured the punishment for a felony should not be liable to have reflections made upon him. . . . I only wish" (he said in conclusion) "to add that nothing, in our judgment, has a tendency to limit the power of inquiry into the previous character of a person tendering himself as a witness; questions may then be put from a justifiable motive, and the occasion is proper. But needlessly to rake up the past misfortunes of another person shows a malignant and wicked frame of mind."

Lord Justice Cotton, supporting Lord Justice Brett, said: "It was no doubt thought a matter of public policy that a person leading a reputable life should not be reproached with his former misfortune. . . . I need hardly say that the statute does not prevent a full inquiry into the past history of any man whenever it is a matter of duty to form a right estimate of his credibility or character."

The bearing of these judgments, so deliberately given, on my own position is abundantly clear. When, in 1884, I published my pamphlet, "The Zulu Iniquity," I had no doubt whatever as to my

moral right to live down the prejudice resulting from earlier events. These judgments assured me that my legal right was equally incontestable. When the penalty has once been endured, the legal stigma of the offence is extinguished, and from that moment the person concerned is at liberty to build up his reputation afresh. That, no doubt, was what was in the mind of the late Matthew Arnold when he wrote to me in 1883 that, in his opinion, "that old story," as he called it, ought not then to tell against me in any way. The moral rehabilitation—the building up of a "new capacity and credit"—is the essential thing; but when that has been duly attended to, the new capacity and credit cannot be impugned by any reference to a legal defect that has been legally made good. The idea of keeping in perpetual remembrance, in spite of moral rehabilitation, a legal offence that has been legally punished, is as contrary to law as it is contrary to morals.

Naturally, the realisation of this fact rendered me all the more desirous to counteract the attack made on my character in 1883. Arguing, too, from my own case to the general question, I realised the unrighteousness of the doctrine of eternal social punishment as applied to any class of persons—to men who might be in the same position as myself; to women who might have

made a slip of another kind. It was in protest against this unrighteous and immoral doctrine that, in 1887, I wrote my story, "The Fiery Furnace,"—the story of a woman who asserted her right to live down a misfortune occurring in her youth, and who, influenced by motives precisely the same as those which influenced myself, succeeded in doing so.¹

Influenced by these considerations, I took it to be my duty, on the termination of my connection with the *Natal Witness*, to proceed to England and endeavour to get matters cleared up. I wrote in advance to Sir John Robinson (the manager of the *Daily News*), reminding him of the circumstances under which my connection with the *Daily News* had terminated, and claiming his support. I wrote also to Mr. W. T. Stead, who had then been recently dealing with "the Langworthy case" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, suggesting that possibly he might be able to help me. It had, indeed, been suggested to me by more than one friend in South Africa, including Sir James Sivewright, that I might be able, on arriving in England, to work with Mr. Stead. There seemed some faint chance, too, that I might receive some support from leading members of the "philanthropic party" in

¹ The story was partly published in the *Natal Witness* in 1887. It was published in book form in London in 1895.

the House of Commons, some of whom, including Sir Fowell Buxton and Mr. George Palmer, had, in 1886, contributed, at Mr. P. W. Clayden's instance, to a small testimonial in recognition of my efforts in respect of the Zulu question. The position, however, was an exceedingly anxious one. I had not much more money at my command, after arranging some provision for my family, than would serve to take me to England, and had no certain prospect of gaining any support when I arrived there. In a letter to my wife, written during the voyage, I find this passage:

"As regards things in general, I must say that at times I feel a most hopeless lunatic. The idea of going to England to fight a matter of this kind single-handed! It is preposterous! Yet, in the middle of all this, I look back and see what has gone before, and see, too, that this preposterous course of action has been forced on me in spite of myself (almost), and as the only possible way out of a corner."

Matters, when I arrived in England, did not seem to promise well. It did not at all surprise me to find that the controlling authorities at the *Daily News* Office were by no means disposed to give me any kind of reparation or assistance. On the contrary, they endeavoured to enlist the services of my own personal friends to convince me that the cause of my dismissal as correspon-

dent in 1883 had nothing to do with any political or personal attacks made upon me. In the face, however, of letters written at the time, and of references in the columns of the *Daily News* itself, that endeavour was altogether unavailing, though it was not perhaps unnatural. Finding that I could do nothing by any kind of direct appeal to the managers of the *Daily News*, I wrote, on the 16th December, 1887, to Mr. Gladstone. Here is my letter :

“ I venture to think that my name will not be unknown to you, quite apart from anything else, as the name of a journalist who, for some ten years past, has been actively connected with South African questions.

“ If I may venture to believe that this is so, I will go on to say that, as a journalist who has, during these ten years, battled hard, and in the face of peculiar difficulties, and not unsuccessfully, on the Liberal side, I think I may not be altogether wrong in believing that I have some claim to consideration at the hands of those who are looked up to in England as the heads of the Liberal party. At any rate, knowing from my own experience that principles are worth fighting for, even in the face of all kinds of risks and disadvantages, I cannot but believe that any action of mine in disinterestedly fighting for principles will be appreciated by others who have, on a much larger scale, occupied themselves in a similar way.

“ I think it will be within your recollection that, in 1883, at the time of Cetywayo's restoration, my reputation as a journalist was publicly attacked in official despatches and in the House of Commons, and that further, I believe with the object, and certainly with the result, of preventing me from justifying myself against these attacks, secret attacks

were made at the same time upon my personal reputation. One of the most serious results of these attacks was my dismissal, without being allowed any opportunity for defending myself, from my position as South African correspondent of the *Daily News*. In one sense, no doubt, these matters are part of a forgotten controversy. The injury, however, to my reputation, both as a journalist and as a private individual, remains, and becomes, indeed, more serious with the lapse of time. After several years of the gravest anxiety, I have recently come to England in the hope of being able to take some legal action towards re-establishing and clearing my reputation in both respects. Unfortunately, after much consideration, I find myself compelled to the conclusion that the technical difficulties in the way of effectually taking any such action are so great as to be practically insuperable. I am fully prepared, if I could find an open and accessible enemy to grapple with, to justify my reputation publicly. But the circumstances under which the attacks on my reputation have been made are such, I find, as to render any action of this kind all but hopeless.

“My position, then, as I cannot but feel, and as I believe everyone at all acquainted with the circumstances would admit, is one of the very gravest hardship and injustice. I have been, while in South Africa, the one journalist who has consistently, in the face of all kinds of risks and disadvantages, fought for Liberal principles. I have done so as a matter of duty and conscience, knowing well all the time that it would have been more pleasant, and very possibly more profitable, to throw my own convictions and sense of right overboard. As a result of this, I have been persecuted by officials under a Liberal Government, and sacrificed by the leading English Liberal journal. Even to this day I am still denied any opportunity for defence or justification, while, as I have said, all chance of justifying myself and vindicating my reputation by an appeal to the law-courts is practically beyond my reach. In fact, the sum and substance of the result of ten years' hard and conscientious work on behalf of

Liberal principles in South Africa seems to be neither more nor less than absolute ruin, and that notwithstanding the fact that events have justified all my arguments, and proved the correctness of my forecasts.

"I cannot think that such a result of such work will seem just to those who take a generous view of the duties and responsibilities of journalists, and it is under the influence of this conviction, and believing that my work and the spirit in which it has been done are not altogether unknown to you, that I have ventured to take the liberty of writing on this subject. I have some sort of hope that if I could induce the actual proprietors of the *Daily News* to look fairly into the matter, they would admit that I had some claim to consideration and compensation in respect of the very serious injury inflicted upon me, while acting under conditions of peculiar difficulty as the *Daily News* correspondent in South Africa. Possibly, if you felt that my work gave me any claim to consideration, you might be able to make such a suggestion to Mr. Arnold Morley, who is now, I suppose, one of the largest proprietors of the *Daily News*. If you should feel such a thing to be impossible, I can only apologise for having ventured upon the suggestion. Any claim I have to consideration rests solely on my public work as a journalist, and I have ventured to believe that you would not be altogether unprepared to acknowledge that my work has had some value."

Mr. Gladstone replied as follows :

"I will not fail to forward your letter to Mr. M., but I am sure you will see that, viewing his means of information and mine, it would be unseemly for me to do more."

That, however, was all I wanted, if I could only succeed in getting into touch with the proprietors of the *Daily News*. I wrote accordingly to Mr.

Arnold Morley, enclosing a copy of the letter I had addressed some months before to Sir John Robinson, and to which I had never had any reply. "What I desire," I said, "at the hands of the *Daily News* is fair play and investigation, and I cannot conceive for what possible reason these should be denied me. What I should regard as fair play would be to be allowed an opportunity of personally laying the facts before a committee of the proprietors, and that if there is (as I believe there is) a question of fact between Sir John Robinson and myself, I shall have the opportunity of showing such a committee, if I can, that my facts are correct."

Mr. Arnold Morley, writing on the 29th December, 1887, said :

"I understand that the termination of your connection with the *Daily News* was entirely unconnected with the circumstances to which you refer, and to which you think it was due. Under these circumstances, I fear it will be impossible for me to interfere in the matter, especially as, in the management of the *Daily News*, I and my co-partners have complete confidence in the judgment and justice of Mr. J. R. Robinson, who has for so many years been its manager."

It did not give me much trouble, in reply to this letter, nor could it give me any great trouble to-day, to show that Sir John Robinson's version of the facts was entirely erroneous, and that mine

was entirely accurate. The only effect on Mr. Arnold Morley was to induce him to shift his ground. Writing on the 4th January, 1888, he said :

"The matters out of which your complaint against the *Daily News* arises belong to a period long anterior [it was only four years previously] to my having any personal connection with the *Daily News*. That alone would prevent my interfering in the matter. But, as I have already said, the proprietors of the *Daily News* have left, and have felt justified in leaving, all such matters in the hands of Mr. Robinson."

There was no consideration, evidently, to be looked for in that direction. The actualities of the situation were very well expressed in a letter to my wife, dated the 29th December, 1887 :

"To treat me with fair play, and acknowledge that I had any claim to consideration, would be to snub Robinson ; and Robinson has managed to make the proprietors of the *Daily News* believe that he is necessary to their existence. . . . If their conduct had been fair and straightforward from the first, why object to giving me the investigation I ask for?"

As for the general position, it was of little use friends arguing (as one or two did) that I should not lay so much stress on the necessity for vindicating my reputation, when the same friends admitted that the attack made on me in 1883 had "thrown me back twenty years." My own feeling on this point was expressed in the following

extract from a letter to my wife, dated the 3rd November, 1887, three weeks after I had arrived in England :

“My feeling upon the whole subject is this—that my regard for my reputation is, or ought to be, so keen that I am bound to take advantage of any opportunity that may offer of vindicating and establishing it. If people say I am too sensitive about it, my answer is that I should not be worthy of their respect, and should not regard myself as worthy of their respect, if I were less sensitive. If society cannot realise the fact that a man may value his reputation above his income, or even above his life, it is time that society did realise the fact. . . . The question is one with regard to which the man most concerned only knows what is best for him, and it would be unfair of him to put the responsibility for a decision, either one way or the other, upon anyone else. If, having the chance to vindicate myself now by legal measures, I were to neglect it, I believe it would prejudice my whole future life, and my whole future happiness.”

As for resorting to legal measures, the opportunity was nominally there. After taking counsel's opinion, it seemed that there was sufficient evidence to justify the institution of proceedings, either criminally or civilly, against two persons for conspiracy. Those two persons were Sir Theophilus Shepstone and Mr. Merriman, who, there seemed to be little doubt, had conspired together to secure my dismissal from the post of South African correspondent to the *Daily News*. Discarding the idea of criminal proceedings, I gave directions for

the issue of a writ for a civil action for conspiracy against Sir Theophilus Shepstone and Mr. Merriman, the writ to be put in force in the event of either of them visiting England.

And that was all I could do. There was no satisfaction to be obtained anywhere; a half-promise of work on the *Star*, which was just about being started by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, came to nothing; attempts to get a publisher to bring out my story, "The Fiery Furnace"—a matter in respect of which I was specially anxious—ended in disappointment.

"To you [I wrote to my wife on the 19th January, 1888] I may say that the disappointment is terrible; I can hardly bear to think of it. And yet it seems best to face and admit the disappointment—to admit that things have been too strong for me, and to retreat."

So retreat I did, leaving England in February, and arriving once more in Natal in March, 1888. The debt of reparation due to me from the then proprietors of the *Daily News*, among whom are included Mr. Arnold Morley, Mr. Henry Labouchere, and (I believe) Mr. Henry Oppenheim, still remains undischarged. It is still open to these gentlemen to consider the reparation due to a journalist who, having been commissioned (as correspondence in my possession shows) by the journal of which they were then the principal proprietors to exercise special

vigilance in respect of the acts of certain officials, was promptly sacrificed in response to a cowardly conspiracy organised by the very officials whom he was commissioned to watch.

CHAPTER XI

FROM NATAL TO PRETORIA

THE prospect, on my return to Natal in March, 1888, was anything but promising. There was no definite outlook in connection with any of the colonial journals, and South Africa is not, and never was, a country in which there is any field for remunerative literary occupation. Within a month or two of my return, however, the proprietor of the *Natal Witness*, in spite of our former misunderstandings, offered me the choice between two positions—the editorship of my old paper, the *Witness*, on the same terms as before, or the editorship of the *Natal Advertiser*, a daily evening paper published in Durban, at a lower salary. I accepted the Durban position and the lower salary, on the ground that I thought that in that position I could render better service to the commercial interests of the Colony, which were then, owing to the opening out of the Johannesburg gold-fields, assuming very great importance. It seemed the true policy for Natal, at that juncture, to keep out-


side the Customs Union which had been arranged between the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, and to rely, in respect of the growing Johannesburg trade, on a low tariff and a shorter distance between the sea and the new centre of industry. The financial results of the next two or three years fully justified the adoption of this policy.

When I returned to Natal in 1888, there seemed to be no kind of political cloud on the horizon. True, there was a keen commercial rivalry between the Cape Colony and Natal in respect of the Johannesburg trade, but this was only the prolongation of a rivalry that had already existed in respect of the Kimberley trade, and contained nothing to cause racial or serious inter-colonial irritation. As regards the relations between the Colonies and the Republics, and between the Republics and the Imperial Government, these were thoroughly cordial. It was at this time, indeed, that the late Lord Rosmead—Sir Hercules Robinson as he then was—in retiring from a prolonged term of service as Governor and High Commissioner in Capetown, made his famous speech, in which he spoke of “the elimination of the Imperial factor.” That speech was commented on with satisfaction throughout South Africa by English and Dutch alike, for it seemed to indicate the arrival of a

period when, direct Imperial interference having come to an end, the people of South Africa were to be left to the peaceful development of their own country, in loyal or friendly co-operation with the moral and commercial forces of the British Empire—loyal co-operation so far as the Colonies were concerned; friendly co-operation so far as the Republics were concerned. The idea of political union was in the ascendant, promising, if gently and judiciously encouraged, to lead before long to some practical result, while the pan-Republican idea, which had in some degree asserted itself during the earlier "eighties," had faded away almost to a vanishing point.

And yet, by the evil fortune of things, a step was at that very time being taken which was destined to undo all the beneficial effects of Mr. Gladstone's policy of justice and conciliation, and to throw South Africa back into a worse whirlpool than ever of racial enmity and social disorganisation. That step was the granting of the charter to the British South Africa Company—a charter by virtue of which the whole "hinterland" of South Africa, comprising some 400,000 square miles of territory, was given away to seven private individuals for their use and benefit. I take some credit to myself that I was, as I believe, the first person either in this country or in South Africa to

comment on the monstrous character of the step then taken, and to point out the evils which were certain to result from it. In an article in the *Natal Advertiser* of the 21st November, 1889, I pointed out that what the Imperial Government had done was to confiscate the South African inheritance—the inheritance of Colonies and Republics alike—for the benefit of certain favoured individuals. I certainly anticipated at the time that there would be a general South African protest against this extraordinary step. Natal, however, was occupied with its own commercial affairs ; the Republics, acting by themselves, were powerless ; and in the Cape Colony criticism had been disarmed by the judicious distribution of the Chartered Company's shares. Could, however, Cape colonists have foreseen—and there was no reason why they should not have foreseen—all that would grow out of that monstrous act, they would have protested to some purpose. "If," I then wrote, "the people of the Cape Colony do not join to resent and to protest against this new attempt to plant in South Africa, independently of South Africans, a centre of Imperial interference and irritation, it must be admitted that the situation will be one calculated to inspire South Africans with the gravest fears as to the future peace and prosperity of their country." The apprehension I



then expressed has been only too surely justified. Every calamity that has happened in South Africa for the last ten years, including that greatest of all calamities, the present war, is the direct result of the granting of that charter—of the incredible step by which power was given to a speculative joint-stock Company to control the policy of the Imperial Government in respect of its relations with the delicate and complicated South African problem.

It is necessary to say this here, because of the distinction that has always to be drawn between hostility to the influence of a speculative joint-stock Company and hostility to genuine British interests and responsible British policy. The speculative joint-stock Company has, for reasons which can be only too well understood, always sought to identify itself with Imperial British interests. So far, however, is such identification from being justified that the most patriotic supporters of Imperial British interests are really those who have most strongly condemned, and who still most strongly condemn, the doings of the speculative joint-stock Company. It is the influence of that Company that has complicated everything, corrupted everything, exasperated everything, desolated everything. British Imperial policy has made mistakes enough in South Africa. But no possible mistakes of British Imperial policy, if that

policy had been left to itself, could have made of South Africa the hell that it has become—a hell in which every principle of moral and social order has been thrown to the winds. From my point of view, no language has been too strong for the condemnation of the Chartered Company and those by whom it has been worked. But so far from such strength of language being unpatriotic, so far from its being indicative of a want of regard for genuine British interests, it is rather the symbol of a far higher patriotism than that which exhausts itself in hurling abuse at every one who is suspected of a regard for justice and moderation.

Early in 1890, after I had been working for more than eighteen months in Durban, I received an invitation to proceed to Pretoria to undertake the editorship of the *Transvaal Observer*, an English paper published in the Transvaal capital. After some inquiries and a little hesitation, I accepted the offer. In accepting it, I was swayed mainly by two considerations. In the first place, I hoped to be able to use my influence in the Transvaal in the interest of Natal. In the next place, I hoped to be able to use my influence in promoting cordial relations between the original Transvaal burghers and the new population. Owing to recollections of the annexation of 1877, Natal was a good deal distrusted in Pretoria. I was, however, trusted

there, and it seemed to me quite possible that I might be able to promote the interests of Natal, especially in respect of the very important matter of railway extension. For the same reason, because I was trusted in Pretoria, it seemed not impossible that I might be able to encourage the existence of a hospitable spirit, in a political sense, towards those whom the new industry had brought into the South African Republic. It will be admitted, I think, that both objects were in perfect agreement with a regard for British interests, colonial or other.

I arrived in Pretoria in the first week of March, 1890, passing on my way through Johannesburg, which a few days before had been in a state of excitement over an incident that had occurred on the occasion of Mr. Kruger's first visit. Just about nightfall the Transvaal flag, flying in front of the public offices, had been pulled down, no one quite knew by whom. The incident caused considerable stir, particularly among the burgher population, who were little disposed to brook anything that seemed to contain any threat to their independence. Thanks to the tact and moderation of Mr. Kruger, who made light of the occurrence as a mere drunken freak, the agitation died down, and the incident was forgotten. It was in April of that year that I had my first and only interview

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with Mr. Kruger, to whom I was introduced by the then State Attorney, Dr. Krause. Mr. Kruger on that occasion explained to me his aim and intention in respect of the establishment of a Second Volksraad, the members of which could be voted for by new-comers who had qualified by a two years' residence. From his point of view, the new arrangement was intended (to use his own expression) to be "a bridge" to a more complete recasting of the Constitution in favour of the new population. Meantime, by a series of articles which were translated into Dutch and published in *Land en Volk*, a weekly paper printed in the *Observer* Office, I did my best to promote among the burgher population liberal views with regard to the franchise, railway construction, and similar matters of interest to the mining population. I was, too, able to do something to assist Johannesburg in respect of the matter of food-supplies. During the previous winter the difficulties of ox-wagon transport, through continued drought, had brought Johannesburg to the very brink of famine. In the expectation of another dry season, a ring of speculators, some in Johannesburg and some in Natal, had made arrangements for a "corner" in food-stuffs, from which they hoped to reap no small profit at the expense of the Johannesburg consumer. At my suggestion, conveyed through

the State Attorney, the Transvaal Government circumvented the speculators by purchasing several cargoes of flour at sea, to be held to the order of the Government. The "corner" collapsed, though the benefit conferred upon Johannesburg at large did not prevent the subsequent distortion of this very salutary act into an Uitlander "grievance."

Meantime, I was in constant communication with the late Sir Henry Binns, then an influential elective member of the Natal Legislature, and subsequently Premier of that Colony, with regard to matters of common interest to the Transvaal and Natal; and I have still upwards of twenty of his letters written between March and December, 1890. In a letter dated the 15th June, 1890, I find the following passage:

"I am—we all are—immensely obliged to you for sending so much information of what is going on. Of course I tell Hime [now Premier of Natal] as much as is prudent of what you are telling me, and he quite appreciates the good service you are doing us."

In other ways, too, I endeavoured to promote cordial relations. On the 13th October, 1890, Sir Henry Binns wrote, with reference to a suggestion I had made to him:

"Sir Charles Mitchell [then Governor of Natal] has sent a very civil note to General Smit and Dr. Leyds, to stay at

Government House while they are in Pietermaritzburg. At my suggestion he also wired congratulations in Dutch to the President on his birthday. One thing you may be sure of—the President will have a magnificent reception here, if he comes down, from all classes of the people.”

Referring later, on the 8th November, 1890, to this visit of members of the Transvaal Government to Natal, Sir Henry Binns said :

“General Smit was immensely pleased at the invitation to dinner sent him in the most cordial way from the garrison. They [the Transvaal officials] were timed to leave Pietermaritzburg this afternoon, but Smit said if it had involved staying over two or three days more, he would have done it. ‘For the redcoats to ask me is indeed friendly,’ he said.”

The desire on the part of Imperial authorities for complete and cordial friendliness with the South African Republic is well illustrated in the relations between General Smit and the officers of the garrison in Natal. Nevertheless, as early as 1890, the mischievous influence of the Chartered Company on those relations was already being felt. About the middle of that year, Mr. Rhodes had become Premier in Capetown, thus placing the Chartered Company, through himself, in the position of being able completely to control Imperial policy in South Africa. The result of this new arrangement became immediately apparent in the peremptory manner in which the Transvaal

Government was called upon to accept a Convention which, while ostensibly dealing with the *status* of Swaziland, was really a Convention framed entirely in the interest of the Chartered Company. Had that Convention been pressed in its entirety, it can hardly be doubted that war would have broken out, in the interest of the Chartered Company, between the Transvaal and Great Britain. The situation, however, was saved by Mr. Hofmeyr, who, visiting Pretoria at the request of the High Commissioner, succeeded in arranging a *modus vivendi*. Still, a feeling of irritation remained as the result of this incident—irritation which was deepened in the following year by the occurrence of the events now to be related.

The nature of these events can, perhaps, best be described by quoting from a communication of mine to the *Manchester Guardian*, dated from Pretoria on the 23rd May, 1891, and probably appearing in the *Guardian* towards the end of the following month. Referring to a communication I had sent some two months previously, I narrated how the idea of a "trek" of farmers into Mashonaland had been caught hold of in the Cape Colony and the Free State; how the independence of the proposed "trek" had alarmed the Chartered Company; and how the Company had sought to neutralise the danger by making the entrance of

the "trekkers" into Mashonaland conditional on the acceptance of the authority of the Company. The Cape Colony farmers, many of whom had lost heavily through recent bank failures and the ravages of phylloxera in their vineyards, were willing to accept this condition. Not so, however, were those from the Free State and the Transvaal, many of whom had known and frequented for years past the territory claimed by the Chartered Company, and who were unable to comprehend the process by which a company of private speculators could lay claim to a country over which British authority had never been established.

"Now, as might be expected," I went on to say, "the Imperial question has cropped up behind the question of the Chartered Company's rights. The High Commissioner, finding, doubtless, that the claims of the Chartered Company fail to inspire respect, knowing, too, that under the conditions of the charter the British South Africa Company has never yet established its right to exercise any of the powers of government in the country it claims, and acting, doubtless, on instructions from home, has taken up the ground that the country beyond the Limpopo is British territory, and that those who enter it with the object of founding an independent government, equally with those who encourage or permit such a movement, will be guilty of an unfriendly and hostile act towards the British Government. Now here comes in the danger of the situation. There is a 'trek' towards the north in full swing—a natural movement which has nothing whatever to do with the Chartered Company or with concessions said to have been secured by other persons. The 'trek' does not consist of persons solely from the Transvaal.

Parties from the Free State pass through Pretoria on their way northward almost daily, and though the Government here may caution them, and though it may refuse, and has refused, to sell them ammunition, it cannot stop them, and, indeed, has no power of stopping anyone, except persons who may go northward with the avowed intention of establishing a Government of their own in Mashonaland. Yet, according to communications received from the High Commissioner, the Transvaal Government is to be held responsible for all the subsequent actions of these persons, even if they may cross the Limpopo in the most perfectly friendly manner. It is such declarations as these that have aroused the strong indignation of members of the Volksraad, and have tended to revive the recollection of old grudges which were beginning to be forgotten. And underneath the indignation there is the conviction that this harshness of treatment is not really in accordance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, but is imported into the matter by the mingled inexperience, so far as South African affairs are concerned, of Sir Henry Loch, and the commercial and speculative necessities of Mr. Rhodes."

The remedy I suggested for this state of things—a state of things, I said, which contained "all the possibilities of a destructive and disastrous war"—lay in the correction of the mistake committed in "giving up to speculative exploitation a country whose relations with the adjoining States and Colonies rendered it specially unfit for such an experiment." The Imperial Government, I urged, ought at once to assume the full responsibilities of government over the country between the Limpopo and the Zambesi. Besides urging •

this course through the *Manchester Guardian*, I urged it on the "trekkers" themselves, advising them to petition the Imperial Government to assume the full responsibilities of government. The substance of my interviews in Pretoria with the leaders of the "trek" movement was communicated by me at the time in a letter to the High Commissioner, with which letter I forwarded a memorandum setting forth the conditions under which the step I recommended might be taken.¹ My suggestions included the recognition of the existing mineral rights of the Chartered Company; the refunding to the Company of money already spent; the establishment of a representative form of government under the British flag; and the contributing by the existing South African Governments towards the cost of administration, those Governments thus securing a consultative voice in the affairs of the new province.

I was anxious that, if possible, these suggestions should come from the "trekkers" themselves, to whom I pointed out that it would be much better for them to have to do with a responsible British Government than with an irresponsible joint-stock

¹As my letter and its enclosure were forwarded by the High Commissioner to the Secretary of State "for his confidential perusal," I have no doubt they are still to be found in the Colonial Office.

Company. My suggestions were received and discussed by the "trekkers" in a perfectly friendly spirit. The conclusion they ultimately arrived at, however, was that my suggestions, however good in themselves, were "too British." The "trekkers" probably hoped that the pressure of circumstances, especially the prospect of a conflict with the Matabele, might lead to the obtaining of better terms. With the view of testing public feeling in the Transvaal on the subject, I submitted my proposals to two gentlemen¹ well known in Pretoria, one of whom had been recently (I quote from my letter to the High Commissioner) an independent and influential member of the Volksraad, and the other then holding that position. The opinion of the former, so far as expressed, was to the effect that the proposal was worthy of very serious and careful consideration. The latter inclined rather to the view quoted above—that the proposal was "too British." He added, however, this expression of opinion: "I do not deny that the time may come when we shall admit that you were right, and that we should have done well to act on your suggestions."

I refer to this incident for two reasons. In the first place, it serves to show how totally unfounded

¹ One of these was the late Mr. J. F. Celliers. The name of the other I have forgotten.

and absurd is the idea that my feelings and convictions were anti-British. In the next place, it may serve to awaken some regret that suggestions so reasonable were not adopted and acted on. Had they been acted on, there would probably have been no Matabele war, and there would certainly have been no Jameson raid, no Matabele rebellion, and none of those later and greater calamities which now stare us in the face.

The commercial depression that set in throughout South Africa in 1890—a depression which was the natural reaction from the speculative excitement of the two preceding years—seriously interfered in 1891 with the financial stability of the *Transvaal Observer*. Efforts on my part to secure for the proprietors fresh financial support, either from Natal or from Johannesburg, came to nothing, and in October, 1891, the paper practically collapsed. I remained, so to speak, on the bridge till the ship went down; but as the whole plant and stock were mortgaged to a Pretoria capitalist, I lost heavily over the business, my losses, direct and indirect, amounting to not less than from £1,400 to £1,500. There was some talk of the paper being taken over by the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, the proprietors of the *Cape Argus* and the *Johannesburg Star*. When, however, the matter came to be looked into, it seemed

doubtful whether the former proprietors of the *Observer* could guarantee delivery in the event of a sale, and the negotiations fell through. About the same time, however, the Argus Company had purchased the *Independent*, an old-established paper in Kimberley, and the managing director of the company, Mr. F. J. Dormer, offered the editorship to me. I had no very great reason to like Mr. Dormer, but he seemed disposed to be civil and appreciative, and the collapse of the *Observer* had left me somewhat stranded. I accepted the offer, therefore, and at the end of November, 1891, left Pretoria for Kimberley.¹

¹ Except for the malice which it reveals, it seems unnecessary to make any reference to the allusion by the *Daily Express* to an incident that occurred in Pretoria at the end of 1850. The incident arose out of a charge maliciously made against me with the object, there can be no doubt, of extorting money. I refused to "square" the parties concerned in making the charge, and left the matter to be decided by the Landdrost (resident magistrate), whose decision, given amid the applause of a crowded court, was unreservedly in my favour. A report of the proceedings is to be found in the *Johannesburg Star* of the 20th January, 1891, the report being accompanied by comments fully accepting the Landdrost's decision, and congratulating me on the result. This was the more significant, as the *Star* could not, so far as I was concerned, be regarded as a "friendly" paper. Subsequently, I consulted friends in Natal, including the late Sir Charles Mitchell, who was then Governor, as to the advisability or necessity of taking proceedings against a Pretoria paper—the *Press*—which had incautiously lent itself to the conspiracy. The universal opinion was that it was quite unnecessary for me to trouble about the matter further. Although I was absolutely innocent of any offence, either in act or intention, the incident was none the less disagreeable.

CHAPTER XII

FROM KIMBERLEY TO LONDON

MY arrival in Kimberley was associated with a most disagreeable discovery. My views, with regard to the position and influence of Mr. Rhodes and the Chartered Company, were well known and had never at any time been concealed. It was, therefore, something of a shock to me to learn, a few days after arriving in Kimberley, that under the new arrangement the *Independent* was in the position of being financially supported by De Beers Company, and was expected to advocate a De Beers—that is, a Rhodes—policy. That the knowledge of this fact had been purposely kept from me, there can be no doubt. The question was, therefore, what was I to do?

What I decided to do, and why I decided to do it, was stated in a letter published in the *Diamond-fields Advertiser*—now the only paper issued in Kimberley—as long ago as April, 1894. As the statement I made in that letter has never been challenged or denied, I will quote it here.

"My position as editor was, in some respects, peculiar. Prior to my arriving in Kimberley, the connection existing between the *Independent* and De Beers was wholly concealed from me, and I think I may say that had the position been explained to me beforehand I should have declined to have anything to do with the *Independent*. When, after being a week or two in Kimberley, I discovered what the position was, I had to consider what was best to be done. An opportunity of studying the conditions of diamond-mining on the spot served to remove certain impressions which made strongly against De Beers, and it seemed to me that there was a policy of mutual concession between the town and the Company which would be beneficial to the interests of both, and which could be advocated with perfect sincerity and honesty.

"In advocating that policy, I was as independent of De Beers Company as though their mines had been situated in Siberia. No guidance as to policy was ever asked by me, and no suggestion was ever given. A very few months after I had been in Kimberley, I explained to Mr. Craven, Secretary to De Beers—possibly he will recollect the conversation—my position, as I have explained it here, adding that so long as I could conscientiously give the interests of the Company a general support, I should continue to edit the *Independent*, and that when I felt I could no longer conscientiously give that support, I should retire. I may, perhaps, add that on more than one occasion, in casual conversation with some of the directors of De Beers, I have expressed the opinion strongly that the interests of the Company could be in no way served by a paper which was popularly regarded as being run by the Company."

The fact that impressed itself on my mind after a study of diamond-mining on the spot was that, owing to the greatly increased cost of mining through the necessity for underground working,

diamond-mining had become an economic impossibility except in the hands of a single company, powerful enough to regulate the market price by regulating the output. Hence, bad as matters had become for Kimberley under the amalgamation of the mines, they might have been worse if there had been no amalgamation. What was desirable, and what I believed was possible, was to bring about a better feeling between De Beers Company and the town. If the Company would consent not to take advantage of its position, the town might be more disposed to give its support to the Company. An extract from a letter from Sir James Sivewright, then a member of the Cape Cabinet, written on the 24th May, 1892, shows that in other quarters this policy was regarded as a possible one :

"I don't think [he said] we are likely to differ on the point regarding which you wrote me. I read your articles. I think they are couched in the spirit which must be promoted, and are written on the lines which must be maintained if the hitherto conflicting 'interests' of Kimberley are to be reconciled. . . . I have tried my very utmost to bring them all under the same umbrella, but it is, I fear, an impossible task. Still, it is worth trying."

The Kimberley Exhibition, which opened in September, 1892, and for which I wrote the

inaugural music,¹ seemed to offer an opportunity for cultivating a spirit of conciliation between the mines and the town, and for that reason I gave it all possible support. The domineering disposition of De Beers, however, was not to be tamed, and proceedings at parliamentary elections showed too plainly that the Company would tolerate nothing short of unconditional submission. How little this affected my own independence is illustrated by two incidents. First, in an editorial onslaught I made on the "trapping system" which was so much abused for the detection of diamond thefts. Next, in a letter written to me by the Managing Director of the Argus Company on the 26th September, 1892, containing this passage :

"In the issue [of the *Independent*] of the 20th instant is an article, entitled 'Their Visit,' which no one capable of reading between the lines—and their number is greater than I think you imagine—can construe otherwise than as a studied insult to Mr. Rhodes."

It could hardly be said, then, that in my hands the *Kimberley Independent*, notwithstanding its financial connection with De Beers, was a Rhodesian journal. Nevertheless, its reported connection with De Beers stood sadly in the way of its com-

¹ "Prosperity and Praise." A Cantata. Published in Novello's Octavo Series.

mercial success, and this fact, no doubt, coupled with a disagreement between the Argus Company and De Beers over financial matters, led to its publication being discontinued at the end of June, 1893, at hardly more than a week's notice. My sojourn in Kimberley was not a very agreeable one, but it was marked by one very pleasant incident—the receipt of the following letter from Sir Theophilus Shepstone, with whom I had not exchanged a word since 1883:

“PIETERMARITZBURG, *May 26, 1893.*

“DEAR SIR,—It was not till some time after its publication in another paper that I saw an extract from the *Kimberley Independent* headed ‘The late Lady Shepstone.’

“The paragraph so thoroughly and so kindly describes her character and life, besides being the prettiest and truest tribute to her memory that I have seen, that I cannot help sending you a line to gratefully acknowledge it, and to thank you most sincerely for having written it.

“I recognise the style and turn of the paragraph sufficiently to feel sure that I am not mistaken, and it gratifies me the more to know that therefore it is the expression of genuine impartial conviction.—I remain, very faithfully yours,

“T. SHEPSTONE.”

What I wrote (as I told Sir Theophilus) I wrote because I felt it to be true, and because it gave me pleasure to write it, never imagining for a moment that it would come under his notice. Less than four weeks after his note was written to me, Sir

Theophilus Shepstone was dead, his death having occurred ten years, to the day, after the death of his great political antagonist, Bishop Colenso.

Three months' notice being due to me in respect of my Kimberley appointment, Mr. Dormer suggested that I should work it out in connection with the *Star* in Johannesburg, with the prospect, at the end of that time, of assuming a controlling position on the editorial staff of that paper, a suggestion which I accepted. On the very last day of the three months I was offered a position which, while giving me no kind of control, would involve my acceptance and advocacy of whatever policy seemed good to the Rhodesian clique whose interests were then, as at any time since, so carefully cherished by journals owned by the Argus Company. After consideration, I sent Mr. Dormer the following letter, taking care, in my own defence, that the tenor and substance of my communication should be publicly known :

"On consideration, I find it impossible, having regard to my reputation as an independent journalist, to accept a position in connection with a paper to whose policy I am in many respects strongly opposed, and which I should be debarred from controlling."

It was one thing to make the best, as at Kimberley, of a position into which I had been

betrayed ; it was another thing to march, with my eyes open, into a position the difficulty and discredit of which I could plainly see. The sacrifice, however, was no light one. I had really at the moment no alternative prospect, and as a matter of fact my refusal of the offer from the *Star* resulted in nearly eighteen months of the direst discomfort and anxiety. Returning to Kimberley, where my family still were, I wrote occasional articles for the *Kimberley Advertiser*, then being run on independent lines, and one or two articles a week for the *Free State Express*, a well-known paper published in Bloemfontein. I should, however, have fared very badly indeed if it had not been for my friend Mr. Reitz, then President of the Free State, and since State Secretary in Pretoria. A letter which he wrote to my wife at this time—in November, 1893—places him in so charming a light that I feel justified in quoting it at length.

“DEAR MRS. STATHAM,—I thank God that my good friend Mr. Statham has got a wife who can thoroughly appreciate the position in which he has been placed by his own integrity and through the rascality of others. We know that Dickens had much to bear owing to the unsympathetic nature of his better half, and I have often thought how hard and bitter this must have been to so sensitive a man as he was.

“Your good husband is also a sensitive man, and this has

made my position towards him a difficult one. Whilst I felt that to restrict my expression of sympathy under the trials he has at present to endure to mere words would be utterly contrary to my character and inclinations, I have, on the other hand, hesitated to offer him pecuniary aid, for fear of offending him. I am not a rich man, but have a very good income, to which—after my wife and children—my friends are welcome. Living as I do from hand to mouth (as the saying is) a £10 note more or less does not make any difference to me whatever financially. I therefore venture to offer (and will make it monthly until my good friend has again regained the position he deserves) to send you a cheque to help defray household expenses. Please do not refuse it. It should not, coming from a true friend and admirer of your husband, cause him any sense of humiliation.—Yours truly,
“F. W. REITZ.”

To those who at this time carefully watched the South African situation, the growing ascendancy of Mr. Rhodes became more and more significant of danger. Since 1891 there had been some kind of lull in the Rhodesian campaign of intrigue against the Transvaal. During the year 1892, for example, attention had been absorbed by the excellent bargain made between the Rhodes Ministry and the Pretoria Government for the opening of railway communication with Johannesburg. Then in 1893 the war in Matabeleland had been the centre of attraction. Early in 1894, however, an agreement had been arrived at between the Transvaal and Natal for the extension of the Natal railway system to Johannesburg, this agreement being one of the

results of the establishment in Natal, in the preceding year, of Responsible Government. Immediately the Rhodesian intrigue against the Transvaal once more came to the front—an intrigue all the more dangerous because the majority of the Bond party in the Cape Colony were still supporting the Rhodes Ministry, each, as a matter of fact, seeking to make use of the other. It seemed to be desirable to look about for the nucleus of a really progressive party in the Cape Colony. With the view of assisting this object, I wrote a series of articles in the *Midland News*, an influential little paper published in Cradock, in the Cape Colony, and drew up a proposal for the formation of a "Progressive Association," which was also published in the *Midland News*. The proposal ran as follows :

"It is proposed to form a 'South African Progressive Association,' for the purpose of promoting constitutional and industrial progress in the Cape Colony (primarily) and throughout South Africa.

"The promoters of the proposal are not unaware that, in its original inception, the Afrikaner Bond, to a very large degree, expressed the idea which they have themselves before them. Unfortunately, owing to a variety of circumstances which need not be gone into, the Bond has ceased to be South African, and has become a mere local party organisation. At the same time, the fact cannot be denied that, whatever its original aims may have been, it has become distinctly retrogressive.

"The promoters of the present proposal, while deeming it unnecessary and premature to prepare any elaborate pro-

gramme of principles, suggest the acceptance of the following points :—

- (a).—The essential solidarity of South African interests.
- (b).—The necessity, without trenching on any Imperial rights now existent in the two British Colonies, for complete South African autonomy.
- (c).—The desirability of cultivating, by all fair and reasonable means, a common understanding between all different South African communities on such subjects as railway rates and Customs duties.
- (d).—The encouragement of all legitimate agricultural enterprise.
- (e).—Purity of political life.
- (f).—The readjustment, on as fair a basis as possible, so far as the Cape Colony is concerned, of the bases of popular representation."

The question as to the proper leader for this new progressive party was one of some difficulty. On the whole, Mr. Rose-Innes seemed to be indicated, and his acceptance of such leadership seemed the more desirable because I knew that, notwithstanding a difference of views in respect of certain questions, he was trusted in Pretoria. The new proposals, however, attracted very little attention. Matters had got into a groove in the Cape Colony, and it needed something almost like a convulsion of nature to shake them out of that groove.

Early in 1895, arrangements were made under which I left Kimberley and went to Bloemfontein. For some time past I had regularly written leading

articles for the *Free State Express*, a journal which, by reason of its outspokenness and vigour, had acquired a reputation throughout South Africa. Under the new arrangement, I undertook the duties of editor, leaving the proprietor, the late Mr. Borckenhagen, more free to superintend other branches of a widely extended business. Mr. Borckenhagen, who was one of the original founders of the Afrikaner Bond—the Bond before it became a party organisation confined almost entirely to the Cape Colony—has been regarded as a typical representative of the pan-Republican idea in South Africa.¹ The truth is that, in common with the whole quasi-Republican party in South Africa, his Republicanism waxed and waned exactly in proportion as Imperialism advanced or retired. In 1887, when it was believed that direct Imperial interference in South Africa was at an end, the pan-Republican idea was as good as dead. When, on the other hand, the tendency towards direct Imperial interference again made its appearance under

¹ Mr Poultney Bigelow, in his book, "White Man's Africa," refers to Mr. Borckenhagen as laughed at by respectable business men in Bloemfontein, and not even socially received by the President. It is difficult to understand how Mr. Bigelow came to make such a mistake. As regards business matters, Mr. Borckenhagen was a director of the National Bank of the Free State, while his relations with the Presidency were most intimate,

the High Commissionership of Lord Loch, pan-Republicanism also began to revive. In 1894 and 1895, however, and thenceforward to the day of his death, which occurred prematurely in 1899, Mr. Borckenhagen's political platform was essentially and primarily anti-Rhodesian. On that platform he and I could most cordially co-operate, the only difference, perhaps, being this—that while he was anti-Rhodesian purely for the sake of South Africa, I was anti-Rhodesian, to a considerable extent, by reason of the undermining of British influence and interests which I saw the Rhodesian policy involved.

Meantime, I was becoming increasingly anxious with regard to my literary standing in England. I had published nothing in England for more than ten years, and I began to fear lest I might be, in a literary sense, buried in South Africa. It was by reason of this apprehension that I welcomed very heartily a proposal on the part of the Transvaal Government at one and the same time to compensate me for losses incurred and sacrifices made, and to recognise services extending, as I have shown, over some fifteen or sixteen years. Those services, it is necessary to point out, had been absolutely disinterested. They had, indeed, been more than disinterested, for they had involved me in anxieties and losses almost beyond any monetary com-

pensation. Not the least of the sacrifices I had made was involved in my declining, in 1893, to place my services at the disposal of a newspaper—the *Johannesburg Star*—which was engaged in what I regarded as an unjust campaign against the South African Republic.

As regards the services I had rendered, I think I may say that for years I had been the one English journalist in South Africa, or connected with South Africa, who had, through evil report and good report, insisted on the duty and the wisdom of dealing fairly with the Republics, and of cultivating a policy of conciliation towards the Dutch populations throughout South Africa. Services of this kind rendered by a journalist have always been regarded as deserving of recognition, though they have not always received it. As the *Natal Mercury* remarked, in commending the testimonial I received on retiring from the editorship of the *Natal Witness* in 1887, "when it is known that the end of such service has been loss and sacrifice, it is but meet that the people who have benefited should make some sort of suitable requital." When, therefore, in July, 1895, I accepted from the Transvaal Government a sum of £1,500, I did nothing in respect of which there was the smallest reason for me to apologise to anyone. The money was given me for my own personal use,

without any condition and without any kind of mission being attached to it, and not a single penny of it was employed in connection with any kind of work for the Transvaal Government. A considerable portion, probably a third, was spent in bringing out and pushing literary ventures of my own in England. Another third, more or less, went in providing for my family during an eight months' residence in Natal, and in subsequently paying for their passages to England. The cost of my own journey to England and residence there for six months accounted for a considerable slice of the rest, while the balance was absorbed in an investment which, owing to political occurrences in South Africa, turned out a complete loss. That my work in South Africa—work performed often under conditions of great anxiety and at considerable loss to myself—merited some such recognition, can, I think, hardly be disputed. That my work had regard even more for the interest of Great Britain in South Africa than for the interests of the South African Republic, in no sense detracted from its value in the eyes of the Transvaal Government. It could hardly then have been foreseen that the time would arrive when the advocates of a just and conciliatory policy on the part of Great Britain towards the Transvaal would be regarded in this country as guilty of something almost amounting to a crime.

CHAPTER XIII

WORK IN ENGLAND

ARRIVING in England towards the end of August, 1895, I had no intention of troubling myself very much about South African affairs. Matters in that direction seemed rather more settled than before. A good impression had been made by the cordial proceedings in connection with the formal opening of the Delagoa Bay railway to Pretoria, and there seemed no immediate reason to fear that any serious difficulty would arise between Great Britain and the Transvaal. I was occupied chiefly in matters affecting the publication of two or three books of my own,¹ none of them in any way relating to South Africa, and these absorbed practically my whole time. At the request of the proprietor of the weekly journal, *South Africa*, I wrote a series of articles for that paper under the

¹ These included a volume of "Poems and Sonnets"; my story entitled "The Fiery Furnace"; a study in State Socialism, under the name of "The New Kingdom"; and a musical work, "Vasco da Gama."

title of "Blacks, Boers, and British, and Fifteen Years After," and I gave a lecture on South Africa at the South Place Institute on Sunday, the 15th December, 1895. In connection with that lecture, a curious incident arose. I lunched before lecturing with my friend Mr. P. W. Clayden, who since 1886 had held the position of political editor of the *Daily News*.¹ Taking up that day's *Observer*, I was surprised to see a paragraph stating that Mr. E. T. Cook, then editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, had been appointed editor of the *Daily News*.¹ I showed it to Mr. Clayden, and we had a laugh over the apparent absurdity of the report. The statement, however, turned out to be correct, financial influences being probably responsible for the change.¹ In less than two months from that date, Mr. Cook had assumed control of the *Daily News*, converting it, without a moment's delay, from a sound Liberal journal to the most prejudiced and bitter of Rhodesian prints.¹ The financial ring, when they captured the official journal of the Liberal party, knew well what they were about.¹

¹ This story of the capture of the *Daily News* has been declared by Mr. W. T. Stead, in the *Review of Reviews* for February, 1901, to be "idiotic." He says: "Various good people believed that Mr. Cook interviewed Mr. Rhodes, and succumbed to the influence, magnetic or monetary, of the great African. As it happens that I was the person who interviewed Mr. Rhodes for the *Daily News* on that occasion

I had not contemplated being more than a few months in England, and on the 27th December, 1895, I wrote to my wife: "It is quite on the cards that I shall leave England by the *Norman* on the 18th January, and that, in fact, I shall have started by the time this reaches you. There is nothing more to be done in England." A few days later an event occurred which completely altered the situation. That event was the Jameson raid, which, in addition to the scandal it created at the moment, more than confirmed all the apprehensions of those who, like myself, had viewed Mr. Rhodes's

—so far as I know, Mr. Rhodes never met Mr. Cook—this story may be dismissed as a characteristic specimen of the myths associated with the name of Mr. Rhodes." This is hardly accurate. It was Mr. Stead who had succumbed to the influence ("magnetic," no doubt; not "monetary") of the great African, and it was the appearance in the *Daily News* of Mr. Stead's laudation of Mr. Rhodes, on the very first day of Mr. Cook's reign, that convinced most people that the *Daily News* had been captured. Mr. Cook, like his quondam colleague on the staff of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Mr. F. E. Garrett, was a convinced Rhodesian before he went to the *Daily News*. Anyone can assure himself of this by turning to an interview with the late Mr. T. E. Ellis, M.P., on his return from a visit to the Cape, that appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* in the middle of November, 1895. It was because Mr. Cook was a Rhodesian that he was engineered into control of the *Daily News*. One of the immediate results of that operation was the appearance in that paper of Mr. Stead's laudation. Another result was the appointment of Mr. Garrett as *Daily News* correspondent in Capetown.

ascendancy with suspicion. That Mr. Rhodes was at the bottom of that bad business, no one who knew South Africa had the least doubt. I find it referred to in this sense in a letter of mine dated the 3rd January, 1896. "The most ghastly exhibition," I then wrote, "is afforded by those journals which do not seem to have the faintest idea that any moral principle is involved in Jameson's (or rather Rhodes's) action. I don't think now," I added, "that I shall in any case carry out my idea of sailing by the *Norman* on the 18th. She is very full, and I may find it advantageous to wait a bit longer." As a matter of fact, the excitement that had arisen in England over South African matters would in itself have made it worth my while to prolong my visit for a month or two. My connection with the *Manchester Guardian*, to which I had sent occasional communications for four or five years past, in itself became, for the time being, valuable. On the 10th January I wrote to my wife :

"I have been kept frightfully busy through all this. I am sending down about a column a-day to the *Manchester Guardian*, my stuff, of course, being telegraphed from London over their special wire. Scott, the editor of the *Guardian*, was in London the other day, and wired for me to meet him. He is very appreciative as regards what I have done for them, the *Guardian* having got the reputation of being the best informed paper in England on South African affairs."

It was just about this time that I received the first hint from Amsterdam, where I had stayed a few days in the preceding October, of a possibility of my being asked to remain in England. In a letter dated the 17th January, 1896, I find the subject referred to again, in the following terms :

"The idea is that, instead of returning to South Africa, I should remain in England to watch Transvaal interests through the newspapers. The arrangement would be made with the Netherlands Railway Company and the Transvaal National Bank, who would pay me so much a-year, to which I should, of course, add what I could make in other ways."

A week later the proposal had become more definite. On the 23rd January I wrote :

"Leyds is to be in Amsterdam, I believe, at the end of next week, and I am to go over and see him there. What they want is for me to be a sort of unofficial journalistic Transvaal consul in London."

Ultimately I saw Dr. Leyds in Berlin in February, and at his request travelled to Hamburg to discuss the subject with Mr. Edward Lippert. As the result of these discussions, I received a letter from the managing Director of the Netherlands Railway Company, dated in Amsterdam the 24th February, 1896, the tenor of which can be gathered from the following extract :

"As it is of great importance for our Company that against the general prevailing erroneous reports about South African matters there should be a journalist in England acquainted with local knowledge, and not blinded by prejudice against the Boers, we intend to nominate a journalist resident in London in order to give accurate information about the South African Republic, its inhabitants and its Government, and to correct erroneous reports and false statements either in papers or in meetings.

"We beg you to be that journalist, as we know you have since very many years studied South African questions, and have always been impartial in your judgment."

The terms offered were a salary of £50 per month, with an allowance of £100 per annum for office expenses, which were not to include the cost of telegrams that might be necessary under special circumstances, or the cost of necessary journeys in England. The arrangement was to be subject to six months' notice before termination on either side.¹

With regard to this arrangement, the question will probably occur: Was it the arrangement of Mr. Lippert, with whom I discussed it, or of the Transvaal Government, who, through Dr. Leyds (then State Secretary), certainly approved it, or of the Netherlands Railway Company, in whose name the agreement stood? That is a question which I cannot answer. I do not know what matters were,

¹ The conditional arrangement regarding telegrams and travelling expenses was never, it may be mentioned, put in force.

or are, in account between Mr. Lippert and the Transvaal Government on one side, or between the Transvaal Government and the Netherlands Railway Company on the other.¹

The Netherlands Railway Company I always took to be only agents in the matter ; I have had good reason to believe that Transvaal Government funds were not drawn upon ; Mr. Lippert has seemed to deny that the necessary expenditure came from him. This, however, is not my affair. What I have to do with is this—my motives in accepting the proposal, and the use which I made of the opportunities which it afforded.

As regards my motives, first and foremost was the conviction—a conviction only too much

Handwritten: M. B. A. 11

¹ As the Netherlands Railway Company has been held up to odium in this country, it is only just to state a few facts. For example : (1) The Netherlands Railway Company has constructed for the development of the Transvaal more miles of railway than the Cape and Natal Governments put together ; (2) it has returned, under the conditions of its concession, profits to the Transvaal Government amounting in some years to half a million sterling ; (3) its lines are solidly and scientifically constructed, often through a very difficult country ; (4) the speeds on its lines are equal to those prevailing in the two Colonies ; (5) the leading officials, including all station-masters, speak English fluently, English being at least understood by all the officials. The model generally followed has been that of the Dutch State Railways, so favourably known to all who are acquainted with them.

justified by subsequent events—that the Rhodesian attack upon the Transvaal, and upon the peace of South Africa, was certain to be renewed, and that the failure of the Jameson raid would only result in the more careful and deliberate organisation of future attacks. That this was the conviction of the Transvaal Government is evident from the steps that forthwith began to be taken for providing the Republic with means of defence. As to my own impressions at the time, I find the following passage in a letter written from Amsterdam on the 20th February, 1896:

“I do not by any means think we are out of the wood yet as regards Transvaal affairs. There is a very strong party behind Rhodes and his Company, and they will strain every effort to save both, at no matter what cost to anyone else.”

That being my conviction, and in knowledge of the fact that even then organised efforts were being made through the Press to prejudice the public mind in England against the Transvaal, it seemed to me in the highest degree desirable, in the interest both of South Africa and of this country itself, that someone should be on the spot possessed of sufficient knowledge to counteract, if possible, mischievous misrepresentations. I say in the interests of this country as much as in the interests of South Africa. I might say that I was

influenced even more by consideration for the interests of this country than for the interests of South Africa. Knowing what a terrible calamity for South Africa, and what a terrible calamity for this country, would be such a war as the Rhodesian party seemed to be scheming to bring about, it appeared to be the most patriotic duty of every British citizen, and especially of those who were possessed of any special knowledge of South Africa, to do their utmost to render such a calamity impossible. To some extent, possibly to a very considerable extent, that might be done by conveying accurate information through the Press.

I feel it the more imperative to explain my position in this matter, because not unfriendly critics—*Truth*, for example—have assumed that I held a “retainer” from the Transvaal Government to state their case in Europe. The expression is, I think, a misleading one. An advocate who holds a “retainer” is a person who, apart from any special convictions of his own, receives from time to time certain instructions upon which he acts, and who is paid for thus acting. In my own case, the conditions were entirely different. What I had to go upon were my own knowledge and my own convictions—convictions which, as I think, had for many years stood the strain that arises from unpopularity and its resulting losses. During the three and a half

years over which the arrangement above described extended—from February, 1896, to the outbreak of war in October, 1899—I never received a single word or line of instructions from any official connected with the Transvaal Government, and only one letter — a letter explaining certain arrangements for the importation of timber from America, *via* Delagoa Bay—from the Netherlands Railway Company.¹ Whatever I have said or done in this matter, therefore, has been said or done from honest conviction, and from a genuine and patriotic interest in the peace and prosperity of South Africa, and in the moral supremacy which, if things had gone differently, Great Britain could always have maintained, and ought always to have maintained, in that country.

Of one thing, meantime, I should wish there to be no doubt. It is this—that if I could have undertaken what seemed to me to be a duty without accepting a penny from anywhere, I should much preferred to have done so. That, however, was practically impossible. Remaining in England meant the giving up of all my connection in South Africa. Remaining in England, moreover, it was impossible to rely on such casual journalistic work

¹ Naturally, I had occasional talks with Mr. Montagu White, the Transvaal Consul-General in London. But, as a rule, I had more to tell him than he had to tell me.

as the interest felt in South African affairs might bring my way. I had had, in 1881, sufficient experience of the fate of the specialist, when the subject he is particularly acquainted with ceases to excite public interest. It is true that early in 1896, owing to the Jameson Raid, my work was in demand; but I did not know how soon that demand would flag, and, as a matter of fact, it flagged very much more speedily than I had anticipated. The proposal made from Amsterdam, then, seemed to be one I could accept without blame, and which, indeed, having regard to my anxiety over the whole situation, I ought to accept; and I accepted it accordingly.

The point has been raised, both by friends and by enemies, that I ought to have proclaimed the fact that I had entered into this arrangement. I do not think that this can seriously be contended. If I had been the editor or proprietor of a newspaper, already in receipt of a sufficient income, and had received monetary support for advocating certain views, then, perhaps, no matter how completely conscientious I might be, it would have been right to make the public acquainted with my position. The circumstances in my case were entirely different. I asked nothing, expected nothing, and received nothing for advocating any particular views. What I received was a salary in

place of an income which I had surrendered. The fact of my receiving that salary made no difference, and could make no difference, in my opinions and convictions—opinions and convictions which I had held and expressed for years, often to my own great disadvantage. My business, my duty, was to place the facts of the situation before the public, as far as I knew them, with the object of counteracting, if possible, organised efforts at misrepresentation. The facts I stated, always with the responsibility of my own name, were open to examination and contradiction, if anyone had chosen to examine them or been able to contradict them. The drawback of the situation has been that there has been no desire to seek for facts or to test statements put forward in the cause of conciliation. Hence my efforts failed in their object. In any case, my chance of being able to stem the torrent of misrepresentation let loose from the other side, and supported by the unlimited resources of Rhodesian finance, would have been small. Had I proclaimed my exact financial position, my efforts would have been foredoomed to failure from the very beginning. For, in the following of the maxim adopted by the Rhodesian party—a maxim which recoils upon themselves in a way which, perhaps, they have never realised—it has been held that no man holds an anti-

Rhodesian opinion on South African affairs unless he has been expressly paid to hold that opinion. The absurdity of that maxim will, no doubt, be ultimately recognised, just as in France it is now seen to be absurd to charge with venality all who took the unpopular side in the Dreyfus controversy. But as long as that prejudice existed, it would have been hopeless to expect to effect anything by statements of fact, no matter how conscientious and accurate, proceeding from a source admittedly connected by any sort of financial relations with the unpopular side of the South African controversy. Had I only consulted my own personal interest, no doubt I should have done more wisely if I had stated my exact position; I should have done more wisely still, from a personal point of view, if I had left the matter alone altogether. If, by acting as I have done, I have laid myself open to misunderstanding and misrepresentation, I must be content to endure these as the penalty for having conscientiously endeavoured to discharge a duty which I could not have neglected without the deepest self-reproach.

There is another consideration to which I feel bound to draw attention. It may be expressed in the question: "What possible motive could I have in taking the part I did take, unless it was the conscientious desire to promote the cause of peace

and justice?" Speaking in a general way, it is not upon the unpopular side of a controversy that corrupt or unworthy motives are usually to be met with. As regards myself, there was (as everyone must see) abundant reason why I might be expected to avoid identifying myself with the unpopular side of the South African controversy. I had had an experience in 1883 of the sort of personal attacks to which I might be exposed—of the capacity of South African controversies to blossom out into acts of secret assassination. Every consideration of self-interest should have prompted me, if not to range myself on the other side, at least to keep clear of the controversy altogether. My prudence may be called in question, no doubt; it may even be objected that my views on the subject have unconsciously become warped. But I defy the whole world either to impugn my honesty or to disprove a single statement that I have anywhere made in print as to the facts of the South African situation.

Having accepted this proposal, what use did I make of the opportunities afforded? I put them to the precise use described in the Amsterdam letter of the 24th February, 1896. I made use of them to "give accurate information about the South African Republic, its inhabitants, and its Government," and I endeavoured to "correct

erroneous reports and false statements," wherever made. A large part of my work in this direction appeared in the columns of the *Manchester Guardian*, in the shape of articles "by a South African contributor." In those articles I challenge anyone to find a trace of anything save a desire to supply such information as might assist towards a peaceful, honourable, and, especially so far as this country was concerned, advantageous settlement of South African problems. There were various scattered contributions to the *Daily News* and *Daily Chronicle*, of which the same may be said. There were a few magazine articles contributed to the *National Review* and *Fortnightly Review*, including an article on the Chartered Company; an article entitled "The Case for the Transvaal," consisting of the evidence I offered to give before the South African Parliamentary Committee, and which the Committee declined; and an article on Mr. Kruger's re-election to the presidency in 1898. There have, too, been numberless letters, written without any concealment over my own name, to various journals in London and elsewhere—letters in which I have sought to correct some passing misstatement of fact or misunderstanding of circumstances. During the same period three books of mine relating to South Africa have been before the public. These were "Mr. Magnus," in which I attempted

to give an idea of the destruction of political and personal liberty beneath unrestricted capitalist control; "South Africa as it is," practically a review of South African history since my first arrival at Capetown in 1877; and "Paul Kruger and his Times." All these have been before the public under my own name, and in all three the principles laid down in my "Blacks, Boers, and British"—the principles whose acceptance by Mr. Gladstone's Government led to such satisfactory results—have been kept in view.¹ If those principles have become unfashionable, the fault is not mine. And what is it I have wanted? For what is it that I have pleaded? The answer to that question is to be found in the concluding paragraph of my book, "South Africa as it is":

"There is nothing difficult about the task of making Great Britain the Paramount Power in South Africa, with the good-

¹ It may perhaps be as well to state on what terms these books were published. "Mr. Magnus" was issued at the publisher's risk, with royalties to the author. "South Africa as it is" was published on the royalty basis, with a cash guarantee to the publisher. A French and German edition of this book were published at the instance and at the expense of Messrs. A. Goerz & Co., who were at one time posing as friends of the Transvaal Government. The publishers suggested my writing the life of Mr. Kruger, and paid me a small sum for the copyright. They offered me double the money for a life of Mr. Rhodes. I was willing to write a criticism, but declined the offer when I found they wanted a eulogy.

will and acceptance of every soul in that great country. It is as easy as washing in Jordan. Let the Paramount Power, without neglecting any other interest—there is no need for that—make friends with the Dominant Factor.”

Let it, that is to say, adopt and practise that policy of justice and conciliation towards the Dutch populations which had led to such happy results in the year 1887. What has stood in the way of perseverance in this policy? There can be, to my mind, only one answer to this question. The disturbing and disastrous influence has been the Chartered Company and the financial ring by which that Company has been worked. That it was from this source that sprang the crime of the Jameson raid is matter of history. It is from this same source that have come all the infinitely greater calamities of later times. These calamities, it is only right to point out, were plainly foreseen. “At the moment of writing these lines,” I said in the concluding chapter of my life of Mr. Kruger, published early in 1898, “South Africa is nearer to the brink of absolute disaster than it has ever been before.” And why? By reason of the determination of the Government, in spite of the revelations of the South African Parliamentary Committee, to give its support and countenance to Mr. Rhodes. All the evil that has flowed from that error was clearly predicted. Here is what I wrote at page

308 of my "South Africa as it is," published before the Parliamentary Committee had commenced its proceedings :

"It is possible that that crime [the crime of once more allowing Mr. Rhodes to resume the position of a South African dictator] may be committed. If it is, the misfortunes that will follow will be appalling. The whole peace of South Africa will hang by a thread. Irritation and suspicion will infest every corner. Race enmities will be awakened, which will play into the hands of barbarism, and will infallibly lead up, sooner or later, to one of the most terrible and desolating wars of modern times. These men, whom you call 'Boers,' whom you deride for their surface failings, are not men who can be lightly dispossessed of their independence. / They have their faults, no doubt ; but put them in the position of having to fight for their independence, and they will display all the endurance and valour of those whose descendants they are—the Huguenots, who sacrificed everything for the sake of freedom of thought and religion ; the Netherlanders, who successfully stood out against the forces of the greatest European Power of the sixteenth century. In the Transvaal, in the Free State, in the Cape Colony, in Natal, these men, who constitute the dominant factor in South Africa, are to be found, bound together by those subtle ties of blood and nationality which survive accumulated oppressions and the flight of years. The cause of one, when it comes to extremes, is the cause of all ; and if they see the man whom they regard as an unpunished malefactor visibly supported by the British Government, it will be against the British Government that they will range themselves in sullen hatred or in open defiance. It is possible that this may happen, and if it happens, either the whole structure of civilisation in South Africa will be wiped out, or South Africa will cease to form in any respect a portion of the British Empire."

It is a simple matter for anyone to say whether or not that prediction has been verified. Nor does that prediction stand alone. In a letter which appeared in the *Speaker* on the 17th September, 1898, I said:

"Since the granting of the charter to the British South Africa Company, the condition of affairs in South Africa has gone from bad to worse, and is worse to-day than it has been at any time since the first planting of the British flag at Cape-town. Wealth, it is true, has accumulated, but it has accumulated in few hands. Agricultural development is at a standstill, even if it has not retrograded. The unity and friendliness of feeling that ten years ago subsisted between the various European populations has all but disappeared. The political union which in 1888 seemed to be visible in the near future has faded into the distance. British prestige has, thanks to Mr. Rhodes, suffered shock upon shock. There seems to be an impression in some quarters that unity can still be brought about by pressure. No delusion can be more complete. You may yet endeavour to promote unity by leaving the country alone, and getting its people to believe that you intend to leave it alone; but pressure will produce nothing but explosion."

Again, in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, published on the 12th July, 1898, I said, referring to the whitewashing of Mr. Rhodes by Mr. Chamberlain:

"It is because Mr. Rhodes obtained this absolution that he has been again able to reorganise a Rhodes party in the Cape Colony. Had he been discredited in England, he would also have been discredited at the Cape. Returning

to South Africa, however, as the anointed agent of an Imperial policy, his power for mischief has been infinitely increased, with the result that we are now fairly on the high road towards something like a complete disruption of the European races in South Africa. The evil is now only beginning. As time proceeds matters will get worse. When the worst is reached, let no one pretend to have a doubt as to where the responsibility rests."

Later, in a lecture delivered at Newport, Monmouthshire, only a few weeks before the war broke out, I said :

"This country can, if it likes, send fifty thousand or a hundred thousand soldiers to South Africa, and spend fifty millions or a hundred millions in shooting down men fighting simply for their liberty. And when England has done this, and earned the scorn and contempt of the whole world in doing it, the trouble will be only beginning."

It is a good deal more than a hundred millions that are being spent, while the casualties of one kind or another have reached a total of over 50,000. And at last it is perceived that in very truth the trouble is only beginning. Later still, in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette*, I said :

"There are at this moment only two alternatives in respect of South Africa. These are : (1) Conciliation of the Dutch, resulting in the prosperity of South Africa and the complete security of all legitimate British interests in that country ; and (2) hostility to the Dutch, resulting in the ruin of South Africa, and the creation of a permanent danger to the whole British Empire."

Even at the eleventh hour I did what I could to avert that ruin and to ward off that danger. On the 14th of September, 1899, at the time when it was believed that Lord Salisbury had intervened in the controversy between the Colonial Office and the Transvaal, I sent to Mr. Reitz, then State Secretary at Pretoria, the following telegram at my own expense: "All friends urge cordial acceptance." Considering my previous relations with Mr. Reitz, such a telegram from me, if he ever got it, was calculated to exercise considerable weight. Whether he received it or not, I do not know. But whether it reached him or not, its despatch serves as a proof of my anxiety for a peaceful solution of difficulties which, from my point of view, ought never to have arisen.

The outbreak of war naturally made a complete difference in my position. Arrangements which were unobjectionable so long as peace was maintained became open to question, even though the Transvaal Government was not directly concerned in them, when once a state of war had been entered on. I crossed over at once to Amsterdam, and saw the Managing Director of the Netherlands Railway Company. I pointed out to him that though it seemed impossible for me, on the one hand, to abandon on the instant what had become almost my sole source of income, it was equally impossible

for me to take any active part in criticising the new situation. This was understood, and it was agreed that for the present, and until further notice, the arrangement should continue without any particular return being made on my side.

In the following of this understanding, I declined to take part in any public meeting, and discontinued my communications to the Press, save and except in one or two instances in which personal questions were involved. In January, 1900, the arrangement absolutely terminated. My hope and wish was to be able to escape altogether from contact with political matters, which had become associated with so much that was bitterly disappointing and depressing. With that end in view, I had applied for the post of Ormond Professor of Music in the Melbourne University, and had some considerable prospect of succeeding in my application. To be dragged back again into politics was the very last thing I should myself have chosen.

What is it I have done, or attempted to do?

As regards South African affairs, with which I have been more or less associated for nearly twenty-five years past, what I have always striven

to do is to uphold the standard of justice, of fair dealing, of peace and conciliation, coupled always with the promotion of everything that could tend to the betterment of industrial or social existence, or the development of the natural resources of the country. In making this endeavour, I have never written a line that I did not sincerely believe was in accordance with the truth, nor adopted a course that I did not sincerely believe was for the public advantage, the desire being continually present with me to see British influence assuming that moral predominance which I believed the best traditions of British character and British statesmanship fitted it to assume. In doing this I have so little considered my personal interest that twice at least during the period referred to I have been in the position of being reduced to my last half-crown, without having the slightest notion where another was to come from. I have, in more recent years, laboured to save the country and to save South Africa from a calamity the dimensions of which I foresaw, and which is now proving its terrible reality to everyone in the British Empire. That calamity has come about because my warnings were disregarded, and other counsels were listened to. It does not lessen the responsibility of these other counsellors that the calamity is absolutely incurable. Incurable in any case, as those so-called

Liberals will find who, having voted supplies for a war which they believed to be unnecessary, and condoned an annexation which they believed to be unjust, have since thought to whitewash themselves by claiming to have sought to confer on the Boers, in spite of themselves, the inestimable blessing of British institutions.

The terrible dimensions of this calamity, now so apparent, have added force to the arguments of those who have pleaded for the adoption of a more worthy policy, and have induced in the minds of many millions the conviction that, could they only have foreseen what was to follow, they would have held up both hands against the entrance on such a conflict. To all these persons I have only one thing to say. I say to them: "I foresaw this conflict; I was alive to the steps that were being taken to bring it about; I was convinced that those steps would be successful unless the people of this country became acquainted with the real facts of the South African situation. Knowing those facts perhaps better than anyone else, I made it my business, regardless of all considerations of personal interest, to make them understood. Considering the forces ranged upon the other side, my attempt was perhaps a hopeless one. But it was at least an attempt dictated by the highest considerations of conscience and patriotic

duty, and in virtue of that attempt I claim, and shall never cease to claim, that if there is any one person in this country to whom those who are opposed to the policy that has wrecked South Africa owe a debt of recognition and gratitude, that person is myself." I say this, and I further express the conviction that, though malice on one side and cowardice on the other may stand in the way of justice being rendered me to-day, justice will not fail to be rendered me to-morrow.

In respect of my endeavour to avert the South African calamity, I have failed. The forces against which I was contending were too strong to be resisted. There is, however, something else in respect of which I do not think I have failed. I have, in my own life and acts, made a protest against the cruel and immoral superstition that seeks to fix the ban of an eternal punishment upon errors or misfortunes which have involved a contact with the criminal law or (in the case of women) the condemnation due to a decline from chastity. Every wise and thoughtful man condemns that superstition. Everyone knows that it acts as a terribly effective machinery for filling our prisons with habitual criminals and our streets with professional courtesans. Yet so powerful is the superstition that, in spite of its immorality and its illegality, men and women capable and desirous of re-

covering from a single slip—a slip, perhaps, which may have been three parts misfortune and one part weakness—are condemned to live in perpetual dread of seeing years of toil, spent in building up a fresh reputation, rendered nugatory in a moment at the pleasure of some malicious slanderer, unpossessed, perhaps, of a tithe of their own worthiness. So powerful is that superstition! Yet its weakness is revealed at once whenever a man or woman has the courage to say: "Yes, it is true that that happened. Why should you think I wish the fact to be concealed? Rather than seek concealment, I wish it to be known, I wish it to be remembered."

I have aimed at abolishing that superstition. What the present generation will think of my endeavour, I do not know. That the next generation, however, will both appreciate and approve it, I feel confident; and for that next generation, at least, these pages will stand for record and for reference.

APPENDIX

MY narrative would be incomplete if I omitted reference to an incident which was to me as interesting as it was pleasant. Throughout my career as a journalist I had always looked back with pleasure to my work in Edinburgh, and with regret to the fact that, on quitting that work, I had not been able to find a lodgment within the Church of England. Casually, in 1898, I discussed the subject with Mr. Arthur W. Hutton, who was then librarian of the Gladstone Library at the National Liberal Club, and whom I met almost daily. Understanding from him that he was once more, having never resigned his orders, going back into clerical work, I said : " If the Church of England is wide enough for you, it ought also to be wide enough for me." The intellectual position which Mr. Hutton occupied seemed to be, to a very large extent, identical with that which I had arrived at in my book, " Free Thought and True Thought," written in 1873, and published in 1884. The following passage, occurring on pages 364 and 365 of that book, very fairly illustrates the reconciliation

I sought to effect between popular religious conceptions and modern scientific thought:

“There may, at first sight, seem to be a wide gulf indeed between the man who believes in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and another who feels simply the power, through association, which the figure of Christ possesses to furnish him with ‘an ideal of true, just, and pure living.’¹ The gulf, however, is only one of imagination, and if both follow their ideal, they will find themselves perfectly at one in respect of conduct, even though their respective justifications to themselves for following this ideal may be utterly dissimilar.”

The upshot was that I entered into communication with the late Bishop of London, with the view of being accepted as a candidate for ordination. After some correspondence, in which my theological position was explained, as well as my personal history, Dr. Creighton agreed to accept me as a candidate; and an old friend—Prebendary Shelford—was prepared to give me a “title” as an unpaid assistant-curate, with special reference to a series of Sunday afternoon lectures in the old parish church at Stoke Newington. All the necessary forms were, in fact, complied with. I could not, however, in my papers submitted to the Bishop’s examining board, make any concealment of

¹ The words quoted are an expression of the late Professor Huxley’s.

my views on certain negative points, and, at the Bishop's suggestion, withdrew my candidature. That the incident, however, had its pleasant results, will be evident from the following letter :

“FULHAM PALACE, S.W., *May* 26, 1899.

“MY DEAR MR. STATHAM,—I have been reading some of your poems with great interest. I think that they are of a very high order of merit, and their thoughts are valuable.

“I decidedly think that you have a message to this generation, and I greatly sympathise with it. Thoughts are communicated in various ways—perhaps most surely by the pen in the present day.

“I would assure you of my high esteem for your motives, and I hope that our intercourse may not cease. It has been a real pleasure to me to make your acquaintance.—Yours very truly,

“M. LONDIN.”

Having regard to all the circumstances under which this letter was written, I cannot help regarding it as one of my most valued possessions. Permission to publish it, I may add, was kindly given by Dr. Creighton only some six or seven weeks before his death.

As affording a contrast to Dr. Creighton's letter, I may perhaps be allowed to publish a letter which reached me at the National Liberal Club on the same day that the attack appeared in the *Daily Express*. The letter was posted in Chiswick, and I believe the writer to be a brother of the late Mr.

Edward Fairfield, who occupied a very responsible post in the Colonial Office.

“ Mr. Fairfield would suggest to Mr. H. Reginald Statham that there are other incidents in his, Mr. Reginald Statham's, distinctly *accidentée* career which the general public might be grateful to learn, over and above the condition of payee and payers, which, now at the eleventh hour, they learn subsisted between him and the directorate of the Netherlands Railway Company after 1896. For instance, Mr. H. Reginald Statham might make known how, as he ‘ had a perfect right to do, ’ he consented to remain, at the charge of Her Majesty's Government, during a period the duration of which received the sanction of judicial authority, passed in, let us say, *reclusion*, as the guest of our most dread Sovereign Lady, doubtless at a considerable sacrifice to himself, if altogether consonant with the public interest of the hour. Mr. Fairfield desires Mr. H. Reginald Statham to understand that he was possessed of the true inwardness of Mr. H. Reginald Statham's relations to the public, and to the Board of the Hollander Company, for whose instruction he took from his treasures things new and old, as well as of that other salient episode in Mr. H. Reginald Statham's career, when he wrote to the *Westminster Gazette*, in May, 1897, saying that he did not purpose to take any further action in respect of a letter referring to his late brother which the editor had published over Mr. H. Reginald Statham's signature.”

All that seems necessary to say in respect of this letter, which was apparently meant to convey some sort of threat, is that I have searched the files of the *Westminster Gazette* for the first six months of

1897, without being able to discover any such communication as that to which Mr. Fairfield appears anxious to allude.

THE END

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